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The CAROLINA MAGAZINE

OCTOBER · 1928

LANIER

WILSON

THE TIMID ONE

A Sketch

By JOSEPH MITCHELL

HOT AFTERNOON

A Story

By DANE WILSEY

RHYMES OF AN ENAMORED YOUTH

Five Poems

By JOHN MEBANE

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

HARRIS

PAGE

O. HENRY



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Svidrigaïloff

By Charles Wood

In him there was a swift belligerent scorn
For fate and men, and all that break the sway
Of human will, nor did he cringe and pray
Before the darkness that presages morn;
Nor did he curse the hour that he was born,
Or swear a futile oath against the day
That lust of man, or careless love at play,
Had thrust him helpless from the timeless dawn.
Secure within the force of splendid pride
That neither love nor fear could e'er appall,
With cool relentless strength he pushed aside
The human ties that hold the soul in thrall.
He knew life was in fact no curved race—
Nor cared the track flung out through void
to space.

THE
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MAGAZINE

VOLUME 59 NUMBER 1

The Timid One

By Joseph Mitchell

She finished her supper, drank a glass of water, and kept silent until her father had gone out of the dining room. Then she told her mother that she had a date tonight, that she was going to wear the blue dress with the gold collar, and might she take a bath now. Her mother was calling the cook to come take the things away, and saying wait until your father goes up town.

She was kneeling beside the tub with her right hand under the cold water. Then she got upon her feet and bent her body from one side to the other with her arms in the air like a brown-skinned chorus girl shouting the blues. She hummed, and made up words for a tune she'd forgotten the song to. Then she remembered certain lines. She sang, "Yoo-hoo-hoo, you'll know I'm waitin' for you, under th' moon." Her mother was reading the paper; she called, "Not so loud, honey."

By this time her mother had laid the dress out, across the bed. When she went in, her mother would be waiting to fasten the catches across the back of the dress.

The light blue water looked cool, but it warmed her. She sat down in it and rolled over awkwardly. She lay under the water, then sat up suddenly to see it leave her body like quicksilver. She was pleased with her body; with the way it bent and moved. She was healthy. She stood up in the water and held one knee lower than the other, like a woman in a statue.

Her mother straightened the back of the dress and brushed her long hair down on her neck, then pushed it carefully up again. She looked at herself in the glass, and she looked like a blue flame, like a piece of blue steel cut into; she looked as if she could dance like a blue flame, like the colour of steel cut into. She felt good. She felt that when she stepped out of a room she had all of herself with her. Everything was inside. She felt that her life up to this minute was finished and done with. There were no frayed ends to bother with. The phonograph was playing and it was a waltz. It made her think of things that happened in the moving pictures. It made her think of a masked man riding a horse in a canyon, then of a man on a ship in a storm. She played a foxtrot and told her mother that it made her feel like getting off at a station in the rain with somebody nice there to meet you. With a tune like that it was right to take off your click-heel slippers and sling them in the air.

An automobile came up and straightened out parallel with the walk and a man got out. She said bye, ma and got inside and the man shut the door and got in on the other side under the steering wheel. The automobile went through the streets like a knife cutting through something soft. Then it got out in the country and went fast, faster. The air tore at her dress, long stiff dress, with the flared out bottom. The automobile went as fast as celluloid burning. Once when they were moving around a long tilted curve she opened her mouth as if she'd been swimming and got into a cold current. Not with fear but with the pleasure of riding swiftly.

The man was nice. His eyes looked as if he'd said something he was sorry about. She was close against him. The long curves placed them easily against each other. She was against him as if he was taking care of her. They were young enough to feel the night settling down inside them.

The automobile was slowing down, hunting a side road, searching for a tree to be still under. He was looking at her face. She moved herself in the seat. The engine had become still as a mouse, and stopped. Its warmth could be felt through the windshield. She took a long breath of still air. "I feel like doing anything tonight," she said.

He was holding her like he held the steering wheel. He was kissing her like blue steel. Something in the night inside them both. She pushed him away. His kisses were asking for what the night cried out with.

Her mother had got her inside the dress with the gold collar and fastened the catches. When she got home her mother would open them with her drowsy fingers and kiss good night. Her father would growl and move in his sleep when she came in on tiptoe and the car drove off. The man was kissing her again; kissing her for something the night cried out with. She pushed him away. "You're a coward," he said. Oh, oh, so he knew it too. The skin around his eyes was dark. His eyes looked as if he'd done something wrong he was sorry for. The night was like a pomegranate bush. The night was like blue smoke tangling in the branches of a pear tree. The night settled down like something you couldn't get free of.



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1928

Triolets

By Peter Gray

I was careless of you
So your heart ran away.
I had found you so true
I was careless of you
And as young hearts will do,
Yours took full holiday.
I was careless of you
So your heart ran away.

When you said love would die
Did you know it was true?
I thought it a lie
When you said love would die
But now I know why
And the blame falls on you.
When you said love would die
Did you know it was true?

I don't want to love men
I want them to love me.
How can I fall when
I don't want to love men?
It is not your fault, then,
You're a darling, but see—
I don't want to love men
I want them to love me!

Hot Afternoon

By Dane Wilsey

The city was smouldering grimly. The smoke-stained canyon of 6th Avenue, bordered with charred buildings on either side, shut in on top by the oppressive clamor of the "L", became a dim inferno, a fevered pulse-beat. The Pennsylvania Building squatted gauntly in the heat. Dex came slowly from its doorway, his body stooped with the weight of his shoulders, head lowered from the oppression that assailed him—sudden and overpowering from without, maddening and persistent from within. The discordant roar of the street rose up and struck him a blow in the face. It was always like that. He never would get used to the suddenness of it. Every afternoon it lay in wait for him and left his senses muddled and bewildered with the rush of its attack.

For over a year he had played a game with himself. The street had represented the things he hated, the things he was up against; his wife, his job, his family, his well meaning and uncomprehending friends. As for him, he was just himself, frustrated, deformed by social contact, too futile to stem the invincible with his tired brain. He had tried different methods. Sometimes he would stride brazenly upon the street, hoping to lessen its assault by his fine bravado. At times, in an effort to escape its notice, he would step into it very softly and quietly. But each day the street gave the first blow (which was the hardest one) and his own recovery was always slow, and painful, and never complete.

To-day it was the heat that licked him. God, but he was hot! Up in the office, with the click of numberless typewriters tapping upon his brain like a thousand little hammers, he had thought he would go crazy. This advertising game was sort of a miniature Hell anyway. Nothing but clicking, efficiency, and verbiage. Well, he was out of it now. He wandered down the avenue, pretending to look in the windows, so that he wouldn't have to see the faces of the people passing. A placard in the window of the Manufacturer's Trust caught his eye. A young man with smooth hair and a starched collar was pictured there, smoking contentedly before an open fire. Near him an attractive young woman sat reading, while on the floor two children pored over a picture book. The story of their happiness was a simple one—a story of economy, and of safeguarding the future.

Dex shrugged one shoulder. How could people write that sort of stuff? As if the wraith of happiness lurked in a safe-deposit vault. Or, for that matter, as if a wife and two kids were all that a man could ask for. Soft soap, for soft people. Hell, *he* knew. He had everything that that fellow had, and there was no use trying to kid himself any longer that he was happy. Besides, why should he talk? For six years he had pounded out advertising copy—tooting stupid products for gaping stupid people. That was the kind of a mess he had made of his life. What if he was only thirty? Tied to a job, tied to a family, he was *done*. Oh sure, he had meant to write—once.

When he thought of the things that he had planned, of his high dreams, he felt as a coward must feel, sick, and shivery all over. Some people were like fine steel, quickened and sharpened by life. Others, like himself, couldn't seem to stand the gaff. Perhaps they were over-tempered, but anyway they blunted too easily and too soon. He had wanted to be all angles, and now he was getting round and soft like other people. Why was he always thinking like this, anyway? It was much better not to think, because then he wouldn't always be seeing things that he was afraid to face. Besides it was too hot, and the best thing to do would be to get home and try to get some rest. The heat rolled up from the pavement and choked him. At any rate, it would be cooler home.

He elbowed his way to the subway entrance through the haggard crowd. The fat sticky little men that were pushing about him came only to his shoulders. Physically, he could still feel a sweeping contempt for the whole bunch of them. The smelly little hogs. They usually got somewhere though, and that was more than he could say. It was ever worse underground. The foul air rose in sickening gusts. The place was fetid with the sweat of pushing bodies. He paused to buy an evening paper and to glance hurriedly and absently at the headlines. A wealthy man was dead, leaving behind him children who would gladly tear each other's throats to swell their own share of the inheritance. A score of night clubs had been raided, and padlocked for some vague period of time. The heat had taken a heavy toll of victims.

Dex looked about him. He wondered that people weren't dropping right and left in the inferno to which they had entrusted themselves. Most of them could no longer sweat, and in the sickly light they were grey and sticky. Women with fat doughy faces and vermillion finger nails waddled past him, wheezing heavily. Young girls with hard mouths and counterfeit finery tottered by on too-high heels, slightly worn, trying to conceal their shabby bodies beneath a jaded pertness.

Dex wandered down the black stretch of platform, his mind completely vacant, half seeing the flotsam about him, not as sharply defined human beings, but as shadows in some evil place, brushing by him.

And then he saw her.

She had been facing him, yet he had almost passed her without being conscious of her presence. Now, as if she had slapped him, he jerked his head to the right and looked her full in the face. It was only a glimpse—sombre, startled eyes and parted lips, strangely savage, intent, and questioning. Then he turned away. A man was with her. It wouldn't do to be staring at her like that. He walked on slowly, with an affected ease, and paused before a penny weighing machine with two large pointers, red and black. He spent a long time adjusting the red one, and finally set it at 154, two pounds lower than usual. The black hand whirled up as he stepped on the scales, swung past the red one, and then settled back below it. One hundred and fifty-two pounds. That's what this ghastly weather would do to you. He hadn't weighed so little since the winter that he had had the grippe. Out of the corner of his eye he glanced carefully behind him. The subway train had just pulled in, and the woman was standing a few yards away with her companion, waiting for the doors to slide open. He got in place behind her, walking so slowly that he staggered slightly as he put his feet down. In the rush for seats she never hurried, never lost her poise. Breathing a little heavily, he gained a seat opposite hers. It winded you on a day like this, but then of course he wasn't in the shape that he used to be. He'd never be fat though, like that fellow that was sitting with her, that was a cinch. Oh well, you couldn't call him exactly fat, but he was heavy-set with a big red face and massive jowls. Rather a keen look in his eye though. Not a man that you'd like to have for your mortal enemy. But he wasn't her husband—he was pretty sure of that. In fact, he couldn't tell whether she was married at all, because she had on white suede gloves and kept her right hand folded over her left. God, but she was lovely! He couldn't figure out where her features escaped being classical. Perhaps it was because they were soft and alive that made them more desirable than mere perfection. There was no mistaking the look in her eyes. Only the car full of people kept her from staring at him continually with a curiously searching look as if she just *had* to know if she were right. And once she had made up her mind, you knew that nothing would stop her. What a man wouldn't do for a woman like that! She seemed really to embody the fathomless wisdom and subtlety that he had always searched for in women. Feminine intuition! Feminine wisdom! More dull food for

dull minds. It would make a good addition to the "American Credo": "that women have certain uncanny mental and spiritual qualities that are denied to men". Most women were stupid—God knows he had paid to find that out! They had hard little minds, and sometimes they could be incredibly small. They had a faculty of looking as if they understood, as if they were exercising that occult power of theirs, and then, the moment you were taken in, they acted naturally for a change and took care to show you that if you didn't like it you knew what you could do. She'd never be like that though—he'd wager his soul on it.

She was smiling at him now when no one was looking—a queer little half smile that said so much that it almost hurt to see it. Beside him sat a pig of a woman with dull eyes and lips wet and shining, like rubber. He shuddered and looked across at his lady. Her eyes told him that she had seen, and that she knew all that he was thinking, all that he had ever thought. The wind was blowing her skirts, and he took great care that he should not glance at her legs. It wouldn't do. Besides, he was sick to death of legs. Judging by them alone, most women must be prostitutes. The flesh always looked puffy, and made him rather sick.

He glanced at her again. She smiled at him, almost boldly, and then looked away. That meant that she must have made up her mind, and yet he didn't thrill to that thought. It seemed so inevitable, as if life had said to him, "Here's what I've been saving you for". There was only one thing to do. When they boarded the suburban train he would sit down beside her and say something or other. Then they would go away together, and that would be all. Of course it would be rather tough at first on his wife and kids, but they would have enough money to get along all right—he would see to that. If he should disappear altogether, perhaps they could collect his insurance. He needn't think about it now though,—there would be plenty of time to take care of the details. Oh he wasn't kidding himself either. He knew that he wasn't going to be happy, because no one is ever happy. But life would at least be better, and more beautiful, and a little nearer to the things that he had hoped. He knew these fellows who struggled on year after year, thinking each time that they changed their lives that they had found happiness, and each time wishing for something that never came. He knew them and was sorry for them. He wasn't like that. He knew that it didn't matter what form his unhappiness took, as long as he chose it for himself, as long as it was not forced upon him by others.

Again his glance caught hers. He loved the way her upper lip curled back in little wrinkles when she smiled, and the almost imperceptible slant to her eyes. They would hardly ever talk, for after all,

things like he felt now, things worth saying, were pretty rare. She didn't like successful men; she didn't like happy men; he was sure of that. Perhaps that was why she had picked him.

The subway train ground to a stop, and unconsciously he quickened. His nerves were on edge as he strode out ahead of her through the leaden heat towards his train. There were only two branches of the suburban line. Fiercely he told himself that she *must* take the same one as he. It would be so easy then. Of course he could follow her anywhere, but it wouldn't be nearly as simple. Perhaps it was the heat that was clouding his brain. To where would he buy a ticket? He turned and saw her only a few yards behind him taking leave of her companion. He hurried on. The big station clock glowed above him. It was train time. She would have to come along if she were to catch his train. He was almost at the entrance now, and a guard, who knew him, was beckoning him to hurry. A drop of sweat trickled down the crease beside his nose. Why the hell didn't she come? His throat was very tight, and he had to blink his eyes continually to see straight. There was a dull sense of unreality, of sleep-walking. The palms of his hands were wet, and he kept wiping them mechanically on his trousers. He was through the gates now, and they were about to close them. He wheeled impatiently. She was nowhere to be seen. In a panic he scanned the hurrying crowds. He thought of dashing out before it was too late, and of finding her somewhere, anywhere. His feet seemed dead, and his brain too, and he felt very sweaty. There was a clash of iron against iron that made him gape, stupidly, and he saw that the gates were locked. He leaned against them, grasping the bars weakly, peering between them like an idiot. A guard came up and tapped him on the shoulder.

"You'll have to step lively," he said.

Bitterly Dex looked at him. Gradually his brain cleared.

"I can't," he muttered, "it's too damn' hot." And he climbed slowly aboard.

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October
1928

Rhymes of an Enamored Youth

By John Mebane

RENCONTRE

I had nearly forgotten
My grief and my pain,
But I saw you last night and
My heart broke again!

QUARREL

We quarreled, you and I,
A word, a flashing eye,
A trembling lip was all.
We quarreled and I knew
That our romance was through
(Your face was to the wall).

We quarreled years ago
But Time is kind, you know,
And love must make amends.
We quarreled—time has past
And hatred will not last—
Perhaps we shall be friends.

ENAMORED YOUTH ENLIGHTENED

Just yesterday he fell in love,
The girl was sweet and fair,
Immaculate as clouds above,
No beauty could compare.

But others marred her with their stains.
Today he says he knows
Why more than one bee always drains
The fragrance of a rose.

DISILLUSIONMENT

I, too, have been in love
And felt on my warm lips
The touch of burning kisses,
The sting of lashing whips.

I, too, have seen the moon
Careen across the skies
While my trembling fingers
Brushed teardrops from my eyes.

I, too, have waited long
For my loved one to return,
And I have found that, I, too,
Must only wait and learn.

WHY DO YOU HATE ME?

Why do you hate me
Casting your knives
Sharpened to ruin
Both of our lives?
Why do you scorn me
Leaving your dart
Wounding the earnest
Love in my heart?

Why ridicule me
When you well know
That every hour
I love you so?
Is it that evening
I touched your hand
That you remember?
I understand.

The
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October
1928

Chapter Out of a Novel

By Joseph Mitchell

Allan Nance had sold all his tobacco and there were two months now in which to be still. After the cotton was picked there would be nothing to do but odd jobs. He needed rest. His face was tight. The long summer of work under a sun which hung in the sky like a smear of hell had wrung his muscles and almost sweated the life out of him.

It was late September, and soon the days would be warm no longer. The leaves were turning yellow and spinning to the ground, to the cool moss. The scarlet seed bunches of the honeysuckle vines hung limply among the darkening leaves, and a buggy passing in the road twisted up a wind of dust which, settling, coated everything in the garden.

It was in the middle of the afternoon, and Allan was sitting on a pine block behind the barn, smoking a cigarette. He had been stopping up a hole in the fence so the pigs could not get out. It was still warm and he fanned his face with his hat. Across the fence, in the pasture lane, two cows stood in a low ditch, switching their tails at the flies, and an old sow lay on her side in the mud grunting satisfactorily.

His feet were tired, he was hungry, because his mother had been away all day visiting old lady MacKellar. He sat still, looking in the pasture, separating objects from other objects with his eyes. Mosquitoes began gnawing on him so he got up and started back to work, but at that moment he heard someone at the house calling his name. He knew the voice. He answered and began walking up the lane. When he turned the corner at the grape vine he met his girl. He said, "Hello, Ann."

She was laughing. She said, "Allan, there wasn't nobody up at the house so I just called you." He explained that his folks were away, but she was looking at his face. She had not seen him in the daytime for a long while. She said, "Allan, you look bad. You been workin' too hard. You should rest some. . . . Honey, you look like you been drinkin' swamp water."

He said he knew it and asked her what she was doing away from home in the afternoon. She said, "I got lonesome ova' to home. It's so still ova' there. It's so still everywhere abouts. So I just came over to see you."

She was a strong girl, she was healthy, and she was pretty in some ways. Her hair was yellow and tangled. It was always pushed about

like the grain in heart pine lumber rumpled up because the saw was dull. It came nearer being like that than anything else. Allan liked her hair because his own was black. He liked her mostly because of her hair and because she was so healthy. When he kissed her he could feel her breathing healthily. Her name was Annie, but he called her Ann because it sounded better.

He said, "Well, I am glad to see you." She was still smiling. Her teeth were white as young roasting corn before it is ready to be picked. She was lonesome so she came to see him. He said, "Ann, we'll go down to the patch and cut a watermelon. Want to?" She said yes and held to his arm and they walked down the lane toward the swamp close together. (That is the way with farmers down here. Usually they are nice people. When anyone comes to see them they ask them out on the backporch and cut a watermelon, and they fry a chicken for supper and if they have any wine they put it on the table.)

There was a ditch beside the lane and poplar trees grew on its banks. In September the poplars throw their blossoms on the ground and the ditches get a thousand bouquets. When the blossoms enter the coolness of the ditches they wilt to a strange colour like old ivory—like a bay bud when someone breathes on it. There were blossoms scattered over the lane and Allan and the girl walked upon them.

The watermelons in the patch were all hot and their tops were sun burnt yellow, so they went out in the corn field to look under the hay-grass and find a late vine. She walked up one row and he went up the next. The leaves had not yet been pulled off the corn for fodder, and it rustled against their faces as they passed up the rows and tickled them. He was barefooted and he stepped on a long dark green melon. It lay still on the ground like a crouched green animal, and it was striped; it seemed to writhe with green stripes. When she saw it she laughed joyfully. She did not laugh like that to please him, but because she was glad to see the watermelon. It was as cool as if it had been left in the wet sand at a spring. Allan opened his knife and pushed the blade into the melon. As the knife slid through it the melon made a nice cracking sound like ice breaking on a pond.

They sat on the humps of the rows, on the brown grass which would be hay when it was cut and smelled like it now. He gave her the whole heart of the melon and cut a rasher for himself. The watermelon was good and ripe and it dripped. She got some of the juice on her dress but she said it would come out. She said, "I don' like to see you lookin' so tired down. You ought tuh rest more, sonny." He grunted and did not say anything because his mouth was full.

When they were through with the watermelon their stomachs were full. They were as full as if they had drunk four glasses of buttermilk apiece. They moved away from the rinds and sat upon an old persimmon stump in the middle of the field with the corn leaves rubbing against each other all around them. Her mouth was damp with melon juice when he kissed her and his was too. God, but she was a healthy girl. She said, "Do you love me right on?" and he told her, "You mighty right I do." He was not telling her a lie. At times like this he did love her. He tangled up her hair even if his hands were sticky with melon, and she laughed because she was feeling good.

They walked about the place until it was getting on toward night. He showed her where he was going to sow a turnip bed, and where his tobacco field would be next crop, but she was not interested. She begged him whenever she had the chance to take her to the city and get a job there, when they were married. Once she said, "Well, then I won't marry unless you'll go to the city to live," and he said, "You don't have to marry me," and that made her mad as fire.

He walked across the fields with her until they came to the ditch where her father's farm began. Then he kissed her goodbye and her lips still tasted like watermelon, and they tasted good, and she hugged him tight, and she left him standing there.

While he was going back home he was thinking that at times he did love her and at other times he didn't want her around. She was healthy though, and wanted to look after him. He felt better when she made him see that she was sorry he was tired as could be. She did not have much sense, but she was pretty at times. She wanted to get married and she would only let him kiss her until they were married. She had enough sense for that.

Paintshop

By W. Wadsley Anderson

She sat on the hill 'neath a red and brown birch
And murmured sweet phrases that came from a brain
Much perplexed by love, while the valley below
Bathed itself in a torrent of yellow-gold rain
That escaped from the sun; then the red moulten orb
Slid behind the round top of an indistinct knoll.
A slow vapor stole down—blurred the floor of the vale
That held the rich splendor of delicate gold
And crimson reflections. The scent of the glen
Was wafted to her on dull clouds of gray haze
That pierced languid layers of dreamy gold mist.
The sun paused and attempted to fling its last rays
Of yellow and gold in the valley's dark niches,
But the blue and red faded and shadows of blue
Clothed slowly the sides of the purpling hills.
Little nooks and depressions dissolved in a few
Misty shadows of nothing. The yellow and red
Disappeared and the valley was hid 'neath a shroud
That covered the glade like a river of pearl.
A voice from the depths floated up on a cloud,
And an answer came back from the red and brown birch.

This is a Friendly Town

By Peter Gray

This is a friendly town.
We do not lock our doors.
I have never locked my door and I have
never had anything stolen.
Once a cat slipped in and ate my
greenest cockatoo.
Once a woman walked away with my
husband's heart in her vanity case.

Walls

By John Mebane

Four years huddled within walls,
Four years of failure and success,
Four years of silent loneliness.
The time appalls
When I recall the sombre days
Of searching in those darkened ways,
The nights I spent,
Disheartened, staring at the dark,
Impressive moments—vacant—stark,
Long, empty, dreary years that rent
A gaping hole and dimmed the spark
Of my ambition. I have passed
Beyond those looming walls at last,—
Must I look back and wonder why
I let my aspirations die?

The Pasture

J. M.

To say that writing, or even an interest in writing, on this campus is confined to a somewhat indifferent handful is probably to approach the platitudinous. It appears that at North Carolina particularly the "student south" combines an inept and weakly selective taste in reading with an ineffectual intellectuality. Competition is hardly a conspicuous characteristic of the masthead of this magazine. It is true, though, that this laborer in the vineyards of undergraduate literary thought prefers to ignore, perhaps, the eternal ubiquity of poor poetry, the weak sketch, and the revamped term-paper.

The material for this number dribbled in with exasperating slowness. Even the extra-curricular activity of the campus erotics was merely a bit of slightness. Not to twitch, ever so inconsiderably, the petticoat of local convention—that is a bad start! We fear for our standing among those sons of the college literary magazines of serious endeavor who each year starve with such disconcerting readiness among the New York tabloids.

This is an appeal for copy. The pages of The Magazine are open equally to the undergraduate, the graduate, and the faculty member. We seek the vigorous, the original—as a matter more of course than of policy; and we concern ourselves, in a like manner, with whatever may appear of an æsthetic and thoughtful nature.

The Pasture section, peculiarly, is open to any one whose penchant is towards the genial satirization of campus foibles, frailties, or peccadilloes. But not too seriously, mind. It is scarcely (in intent) a medium for the expression (say) of fraternal failings, or the reopening of the Golden Fleece affair, or any of the irritations of a mind momentarily piqued.—Or of politics.

Campus leaders, apparently, are not so surely definite in their opinions on the hazing of freshmen as is the legislative congeries of this state. From the local tri-weekly, for instance, it may be learned that there is a lesson of life, a moral, and a bit of healthy fun to be got from "trying to scramble like an egg, wrestle with his (the freshman's) conscience, or bark at the moon." It is further remarked that the "upperclassman who directs the performance" is an equal recipient in the consequent hand-out of the three grace mentioned above—perhaps too casually.

On the other hand, the dean of students likes but little these second year (generally) impositions upon his special charge and pastorage. Rolling a peanut across the floor with one's nose is not, he thinks, such a decent or nice way of being forced to conduct one's self.

A mediator though, it is said, has arisen quite capable of directing the impromptu conflicts of these two combative and belligerent classes. His careful attention has

proven a satisfying factor more than once in the battles that are waged in the name of scholastic seniority around the quadrangle buildings.

Superficially viewed, the lack of a competent director of affairs is an embarrassment felt by both factions.

Though often intimate, our correspondence is seldom very extended, and even less frequently of any general interest. Occasionally, however, the fine flush of having our pale hands intimately about a first editorship is somewhat renewed by the receipt of unmistakable literary *hors d'oeuvre.*

Dear Editor,

Now, when I say that this University is bogged up in technicalities I know what I'm talking about.

Because the other night I saw Jerry at Charles's. He looked dejected. He was picking out the caraway seeds with his fork. He looked like he had been unsuccessfully trying to graduate for ten years—and he had, as we all know (not that Jerry is incapable, but he is irregular. That's why he eats bread with caraway seeds though he doesn't like them).

I'm in a hell of a mess, he said, pushing back some seeds into the most conspicuous holes in the bread. He was embarrassed because I had seen him picking them out. I may be unable to graduate next June, he said, because I have no credit for Eng'g 1abc.

——But I thought you were teaching that course.

——I am.

——Well, why don't you register for it and give yourself an 'A'?

——I jokingly suggested it in the presence of Tommy J., and he looked like he would send me a card saying that I had a conflict.

A caraway seed hit me in the right eye. In the infirmary I was trying to see through my left eye what Walter was saying in the *Tar Heel.* It looked like he wasn't saying much. Damn these technicalities, anyway, thought I. . . .

To those intensely interested in sweetness and light, the suppression of every thing from birth control to bootleg, and the regulation of any variety of human conduct, the placard issued by the Inter-fraternity Council headed "Rushing Rules, 1928" is a document not to be casually appraised.

The fraternities are on their honor (an impalpable something whose security of actuality is the pledging of a one hundred dollar bond) not to use any lethal weapon in the social coercion of a probable pledge. Fifteen carefully constructed strictures, which, if adhered to, would make the free choice of his friends by a freshman an impossibility—or a series of stealthily seized inopportunities—have been posted. Despite the preoccupation of these rules with the minutiæ of everyday drug-store,

campus, and classroom meetings, there is no attempt to better the system of a rushing period obviously too short to permit anything save an undignified scrambling on the part of the fraternities, and an equally frantic effort at calm selection on the part of the freshmen. In defiance of the implications of prevading fraternal criminality of this affiche, and as a member of five regularly organized campus clubs, the writer has never directly known any case warranting even the issuance of these "rules".

The Inter-fraternity Council is not a *representative* body.

Lullaby

By John F. Smith

Bully-frog a-boomin' in de bubblin' spring,
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby-O,
Bully-bat a-flappin' wid his big long wing,
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby.
Whippo'will a-callin' from de ole oak tree,
Jack-o'-lantern jumpin' as he winks at me,
Eyes so tired an' sleepy dat he des cain't see,
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby-O.

Daddy still a-workin' in de ole hot fiel',
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby-O,
Mammy makin' batter from de fresh co'n meal,
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby.
Pickaninny paddlin' in de ole bateau,
Muley-cow a-mooin' where de swamp grass grow,
Bell a-ting-a-lingin' as she come home slow,
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby-O.

Scroochy-owl a-mou'nin' in de low swamp lan',
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby-O,
Pollywog a-wigglin' in de warm wet san',
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby.
Alligator hidin' where de rush grow high,
Skeeter-hawk a-hummin' where de jack-snipe fly,
Baby fall a-sleepin' as de daylight die,
Hushaby, my baby, hushaby-O.

book bazaar

Priapus and the Prophet

THE STRANGE CASE OF MISS ANNIE SPRAGG. By Louis Bromfield. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 313 pp. $2.50.

After having displayed remarkable evolution as a methodical stylist and a literary psychologist in his earlier works—one of which, *Early Autumn,* was awarded a Pulitzer Prize—Louis Bromfield in his latest novel, *The Strange Case of Miss Annie Spragg,* has changed his technique completely, unconsciously or not, and has embraced wholeheartedly the prevailing mode of Thornton Wilder. Even the prefatory note—

The author does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his characters. Therefore if any reader feels moved to write an abusive letter, he is asked to address it to Father d'Astier, the Principessa d'Orobelli, Mrs. Weatherby, Mr. Winnery, Bessie Cudlip or even poor Miss Annie Spragg herself. By this time she knows more about God than any of us who are left on the earth—

would not have been written but for *The Bridge of San Luis Rey.*

The tale opens at the villa of Mrs. Weatherby near the environs of Brinoë in the foot hills of southern Italy. Old Miss Annie Spragg, an expatriate American, has just died. Sister Annunziata, the attendant, declared that the dead body had been branded with the sign of Saint Francis of the Birds, the Stigmata. Mr. Winnery, correspondent for the *Ladies Own World,* who is working on a colossal work, "Miracles and Other Natural Phenomena", visits Mrs. Weatherby, who knew Annie Spragg in Winnebago Falls, Iowa, for information about the deceased. There he meets the Principessa d'Orobelli, who never discovered love because Father d'Astier, a princely churchman, observed his vow of chastity. The bulk of the story revolves around these two wealthy and passionate and altogether afraid individuals whose lives are influenced in a strange psychical fashion by those of Miss Annie Spragg; her father, The Prophet, an itinerant preacher, who disappeared in a cloud of smoke thirty years before in middle-western America; and her brother, Uriah, who always read the Bible "in the cold tight voice of one in pain." To make understandable the psychic aura around these people is to be the glorious achievement of Mr. Winnery in his work. And after years of magnificent toil he is able to catalogue every detail but one. He is unable to explain the resemblance between a statue of Priapus found in a cesspool on the grounds of Mrs. Weatherby's villa and daguerreotype portrait of the Prophet made just before he entered the Temple of New Jerusalem never to be seen again.

Quite often descriptive paragraphs as exceedingly excellent as this one describing the statue are scattered throughout the novel:

Whatever hand carved the figure had moved with understanding and passion. The statue carried in every line a kind of quivering voluptuousness. The very curves of the muscles and the line of the back and hips quivered between the realms of ecstasy and that disgust which follows quickly upon satiety. It was a glorification of sensuality. Indeed, the sculptor had done his work so well that for a long time the little group about the excavation stood awed into silence, as if something had risen from the red clay which roused disturbing memories in those who were experienced and disturbing intimations in those who had remained until that moment virginal. No one could have remained entirely chaste after looking upon the statue.

Byron White.

Silhouettes from Scissors and Pen

My Studio Window. By Marietta Minnigerode Andrews. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 450 pp. $5.00.

Very few sketches of prominent public figures and recitals of personal reminiscence fail to become monotonous and boring to the casual reader, searching after momentary entertainment, and Mrs. Andrews' volume can scarcely be termed an exception. It is, however, rescued from much of the dullness peculiar to such a work by a certain Gallic lightness and a style that is not at all bad.

For thirty years Mrs. Andrews has looked out through her windows upon the main artery of Washington's official and private life—a heterogenous, incongruous panorama which she seems to have depicted rather faithfully. With her we see a picturesque procession pass by—His Excellency the Minister from Siam, as black as Aunt Jemina, briskly twirling a gold-headed cane; Salvation Army men and girls, singing through the street of Atonement through vicarious suffering; fashionable weddings—brides with thousands of dollars in the lace of their veils, frightened young faces in swiftly rolling limousines; a gorgeous Chinese diplomat, regalia and costume eloquent of the Orient; presidents and prize-fighters, diplomats and society climbers, heroes and four-flushers.

The transitory personnel of Washington's official circles furnishes the material for most of the sketches. There are bits of reminiscence and gossip of every president and his wife from Cleveland to Coolidge. John Hay, "alert, well-groomed, one might say dapper" made his walk past Mrs. Andrews' door. William Gibbs McAdoo, "enigmatical, electrical, apparently endowed with inexhaustible energy and perpetual youth," often enters into the sketches, as does William Jennings Bryan, "untidy, loose-jointed, friendly, with the long hair and wide mouth that seem to stamp the rural statesman."

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the book is the collection of over fifty excellent silhouettes with which it is illustrated. They are the work of Mrs. Andrews and her husband, the director of the Corcoran Art Gallery.

It is certain that Mrs. Andrews' work provides no momentous addition to the literature of the day, but it provides fairly interesting reading of more than ordinary worth, especially to the person concerned with the Washington of the past forty years and its public and private life. It provides a valuable adjunct to the study of American life, fashions, and fads.

Glenn Holder.

Telfair, Jr. and the Lyric South

THE LYRIC SOUTH. An Anthology of Recent Poetry from the South. Edited by Addison Hibbard. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.25.

Viewed strictly in the light of literary criticism an anthology of poetry obviously can be no greater than the greatest poem included. But the intent of the anthologist is quite another matter.

Mr. Hibbard, onetime author of the *Literary Lantern* over the signature *Telfair, Jr.,* and at present teacher of American literature at this university, intends a "representative collection of verse from the Southern States" and one based less on local pride and sectionalism than upon the merits of its verse. He feels that he can "with some degree of veracity herald a sincere and genuine, conscious and yet fairly spontaneous (poetic) movement in the South." In publishing this volume of poetry written since 1915, he believes it possible to indicate a new movement, one characterized by "something very much akin" to the artistic rather than the sectional spirit.

During the past decade and at the present a poetic revival of steadily increasing intensity has spread throughout the Southern states. Cities, states, and universities are not only recognizing the value of an appreciation of poetry, but are also sponsoring poetry societies and classes in creative writing, and offering prizes for the best work of Southern youth. In prose as well a new vitality is beginning to manifest itself. Writers like Ellen Glasgow, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, and Paul Green are contributing—not to Southern alone—but to American literature.

But, as Mr. Hibbard writes in his introduction, the South still follows Poe in his consideration of the didactic as poetical heresy: "it is, in a very real sense, a lyric South concerned with beauty and emotional ecstasy almost to the exclusion of anything like actuality." Legend and local color, nature and the roll of the seasons are the most recurrent themes, and the *new* interest in the poor white, the Negro, the foibles of the "old South" as yet furnishes only an occasional strand to be woven into the tapestry of the poet. This preoccupation with Beauty, the greater concern for music and emotion rather than cerebration, the substitution for subtlety of vagueness and of optimism for analysis ties up somewhat with the suggestion of the present writer of the *Literary Lantern,* Howard Mumford Jones, that a poetic moratorium of one year be declared in the South, and that a system of rules for the writing of verse (the first of which is that no poet, under

penalty of being boiled in oil, shall write a poem mentioning dreams, unrequited love, April blossoms, or his own probable death) be rigidly enforced.

Despite the recent appearance of such poets as Countee Cullen and James Weldon Johnson there are no Negro writers included in *The Lyric South.* This omission, however, is apparently more an adherence to intention than the parade of any racial discrimination, for neither Conrad Aiken nor Clement Wood nor John Gould Fletcher is given space.

As a document marking and crystallizing the progress of poetry in the South *The Lyric South* (whether the included poems be accessible or inaccessible) is an important, successful, and entirely readable fulfillment of the compiler's intention.

J. M.

From the High Tower

THE TOWER. By William Butler Yeats. Macmillan Company. 110 pp. $2.25.

The Tower, it seems, is the parting gift, the last will and testament, of a poet grown old. He has grown querulous and unintelligible and old. Those writings by which we will remember Yeats have the wild grey beauty of the west coast of Ireland; these later thing have in them something of Dublin, the city of the old, where youth lives only in memory. He has turned on himself and, reading out of the dark gaelic soul, says,

> "The abstract joy,
> The half read wisdom of daemonic images.
> Suffice the ageing man as once the growing boy."

There are, naturally, passages that flash with the strange lights of his earlier period. This,

"The innumerable clanging wings that have put out the moon . . ." is a line that might have been written by the younger Yeats; compare it with the line from "Shadowy Waters,"

> ". . . a wind
> Would rise of a sudden, or a wave so huge,
> It had washed among the stars and put them out. . . ."

With a few exceptions, however, *The Tower* is a counting-over, a summing-up, a venture into philosophy.

> "Never to have lived is best, ancient writers say;
> Never to have drawn the breath of life,
> Never to have looked into the eye of day;
> The second best's a gay goodnight and quickly turn away."

Of all the arts, poetry is most abused; it is used as the vehicle for political propaganda, for sermons, and for philosophies. This does not imply restriction

of the field of poetry, but suggests that the function of the poet is to sing. To Yeats we owe many beautiful pieces of poetry; picture of

"Caolte tossing his burning hair,
And Uiamle calling 'Away, come away";

to Yeats also goes part credit for the life of the Abbey Theater. Rumor has it that in his youth he loved an actress of great beauty; in later life he married a plain capable woman of some fortune. *H. T. McCone.*

Muddy Water Mysteries

Death Near the River. By Monte Cooper. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 267 pp. $2.00.

It seems as if Mr. Cooper, pitying the reader of mystery stories, has chosen for his novel, at least, a new setting. In such surroundings as are provided by the region of the lower Mississippi anything can happen. And it does with the customary procedure of criminal mysteries. A unique feature of the book is that the entire story takes place within twenty-four hours. However, the impression left in the reader's mind is that a much longer period of time elapses. The plot, following along the line of the average mystery story, is quite involved. The superfluity of action cannot entirely soothe the mind of the reader which becomes irritated because of the utter lack of picturesqueness. The only passage of good description in the novel is where the author pictures the shanty house as "a brown ostrich egg on a monstrous clay platter".

A newspaper man is called to the country of the lower Mississippi by a friend of his old New York days. Within a very few hours he is enmeshed in a tangle of strange forces and human fears, some of the threads of which trace back to the heart of Africa and others to the fashionable sections of New York. A woman is found dead, apparently murdered, in a shantyboat. Suspicion falls upon three-fourths of the assemblage. Yet the deed was effected by one who is entirely free of all suspicion. The characters are two newspapermen, a level-headed country sheriff, and an abundance of superstitious negroes.

The negro dialect is not always well-chosen; it varies from chapter to chapter. Superstitious elements prevade the novel. An acknowledgment is made by the author to Dr. Newbell Niles Puckett for permission to use material from his "Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro" which was issued by the University of North Carolina Press. Such beliefs as tying a black string around the leg of a chicken will appease the spirit of one dead, putting bread and coffee under the house will keep the spirit away, and facing a bed east and west will cause a dead person to rest easy are frequently presented. The author, throughout a great part of his story, endeavors to show the psychological reactions of the mind of a person who, although accused of the crime, is innocent. The story is loosely woven, and the presentation of conversation is poor, but there are a few tense dramatic moments which, paradoxically, both heighten and relieve the situation. *John Mebane.*

The CAROLINA MAGAZINE

October 1928

"L'Art Pour L'Art"

THE POEMS AND PROSE OF ERNEST DOWSON. With memoir by Arthur Symons. New York: The Modern Library. 1928. 219 pp. 95c.

Lovers of beauty for its own sake will find in the writings of Ernest Dowson no marring effort after the graver and deeper things of life. This poet of that portion of the nineteenth century associated with the beauties of the Decadents, the sly indecencies of Beardsley, the exotic brilliants of Wilde, gave all his short life of sickness and of yearning to the writing of a little verse and not much more prose.

His prose is like his poetry, exquisite, sad, and quietly lyric. With a love of France and all things French, Dowson's respect and care for his prose reveals a preoccupation with the small niceties of word usage similar to that of Flaubert. He wrote a number of short stories which he called *Dilemmas,* "stories and studies in sentiment." None of them are really "short-stories" in the sense assumed by that phrase since Poe and O. Henry. Most of them, beginning with an autumnal description that casts a sombre mark of languid, almost inarticulate sorrow over the whole study in sentiment, attempt merely to crystallize into beautiful phrasings some nuance of those emotions which greater artists have considered, perhaps, with less respect, and surely with a less degree of the personal, the fastidious note. Dowson knew his limitations,—or perhaps he preferred his limitations. That which he felt himself unable to express beautifully, perfectly, he passed by, worshipping before and writing after his own inspiration. Let the greater, sterner men hunt down and write the meaning of all Life across the page of Time. His was the nature obliged by his own proud love of self, as much as by his humble love of beauty, to strive through the delightful labor of writing to capture the beauty of things too frail for the attentions of stronger men.

Of his two volumes of short-stories, only five are included in this reprint volume. None of the stories are striking; none of them are hurried, swift or direct in action. Yet beneath the quiet thoughtfulness of their delicate and sensitive English, there is a sort of nervous intensity, an aimless excitement. The themes are always of the hopeless rather than of the rebellious emotions. His characters never struggle, caught and molded by a particular society, as do those of Balzac. Never, like the characters of Flaubert, do they fall victims to some disastrous dominant trait. Unfortunate and weak, rather than inherently evil, their most often recurring fate is disappointment. "Souvenirs of an Egoist" is characteristic. It is the story of an artist, successful, contemptuous, and established in the highest *salon* of Paris, who pauses—over a wine-glass and a cigar—musing, for a moment half regretfully, over the organ-grinder Ninette, the little street girl who found him ragged and cold in the streets, and who kept him, bought him a violin. How he left her, without thought or regret, at the beck of a woman in a higher society. Below in the dreary street, a woman grinds an organ. He sends his servant with a coin.

Dowson never uses the sting of the scorpion's tail in his stories. No unexpected whip lashes out at the close of these sad and quiet harmonies of phrase. Rejecting

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nature when it appeared too naked and clamant, he strives for elegance, beauty and the faultless. Scorning life mildly, he embraces art fervidly.

In his poetry (which takes up the greater part of this volume) it is the commonplaces, the trite, and the simple which Dowson transforms from the usual to the beautiful with his ability for phrase and his feel for the music of a line. Love and death, the brief hour of youth, and the sadness of unrequited love—all the old and familiar themes—are for him the only original true subjects for poetry. He took, according to Symons, his technical theories from Poe, basing the worth of poetry on its approach to the simple complexity of music.

Despite the peculiar beauty of his prose, Dowson will probably live longest through his poetry. He was so far exceeded by more capable "sentimentalists" and "symbolists" of his own period, and his prose contribution was so slight in quantity, that criticized historically it may easily be found wanting. But the quiet joy which one may find in the loveliness of his verse, written always with fine subtlety and poignancy and with the major attention given to sorrow and pain, will for long years surely satisfy those who love beauty for its own sake.

J. M.

Books Received and Books to be Reviewed

Blue Trousers: The Fourth Part of the Tale of Genji. By Lady Murasaki. Translated by Arthur Waley. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

The House at Pooh Corner. By A. A. Milne. Decorated by Ernest H. Shepard. E. P. Dutton & Co. $2.

Hilltop in the Rain. By James Saxon Childers. D. Appleton and Company. $2.

The Bishop's Wife. By Robert Nathan. Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.

Jack Kelso. By Edgar Lee Masters. D. Appleton and Company. $2.50.

Day of Fortune. By Norman Matson. The Century Company. $2.50.

The Children. By Edith Wharton. D. Appleton and Company. $2.50.

A Little Clown Lost. By Barry Benefield. The Century Company. $2.

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The Writers

Joseph Mitchell, frequent contributor to The Magazine, worked last year with the Bureau of Community Drama, and has published acticles on the theatre in *The Billboard* and *The New Student* Charles Wood, liberal arts student in this university, chooses Dostoevsky's superman of *Crime and Punishment* as material for his sonnet. . . . Dane Wilsey has been elsewhere, but prefers Chapel Hill. Hot Afternoon is his first contribution to this magazine John Mebane, managing editor of the Tuesday *Tar Heel*, has published light verse in various magazines Peter Gray is the equally masculine and colorful pseudonym of an University alumna W. Wadsley Anderson is at present engaged in the writing of feature stories for Southern newspapers. He is the "Andy Anderson of *Buccaneer* fame John F. Smith, a graduate student, publishes for the first time in The Magazine The book reviews are by Byron White, Glenn Holder, H. T. McCone and other students at this university who are interested in writing.

Edited by John Marshall

Gordon Gray, *Business Manager*

The Carolina Magazine

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The Writers

Entered as second-class matter at the Postoffice at Chapel Hill, N. C., October 1, 1927.

Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced, and have return address on cover. All manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor, The Carolina Magazine, *Box 710, Chapel Hill, N. C.*

To an Autumn Cloud

By Harry de Meaux Mechem

Life is the light in thy bosom
From ephemeral wisps of thy margin
Ring visual tinkles and chimes
Power is embodied in thy corrugated battlements
Flitting glimpses of purple and sapphire irridescence
Foretell the melody of love

Ethereal breath of the infinite
Floating dreamily onward in a sea of blue
Can thunder and tempest be born of such?
Pink, white, and azure
Harmonious blendings of color delight the eye
Yet some elusive miasma lurks just beyond the view

Behind all the fleeciness
Back of the snow
Lurks a sinister entity
Leering red glow
Fantastic fantoms of
Beelzebub's breath
Hideous anomalies
Presaging Death

THE
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MAGAZINE

VOLUME 59 NUMBER 2

Tobacco Market

By Joseph Mitchell

Don't ever get the idea that a tobacco farmer has a soft life. These guys have to work a crop six or seven months before they can sell it. And tobacco planters can't piddle along like those who grow cotton. They have to work like hell. There are months at a time when a man gets up at five o'clock and works until it is so dark he can't see his plow. In the middle of the day he stops just long enough to grunt, then back at it again, following a spindly mule up and down the hot sand rows. When it gets too dark to work he goes to the house and piles over on the bed and sleeps like a log. Then follows another day just like the one before. And at the end of the year there is not enough money to pay taxes or the fertilizer bill. You'd think a man would feel cheated if he worked like this and got nothing for it. It seems that he'd get a pistol and shoot up somebody who had a lot of money, and take some of it. But they don't think of that. Most of them don't. They just get drunk and beat their wives and whip the young'uns for keeping so much noise. But the preachers worry them about hell and keep them afraid to do anything but plow.

The work starts right after Christmas. Along about the middle of July until the last of August the job begins to get stiff and it is easy for a man to work himself to death and not accomplish a thing. This is when the tobacco plants begin to yellow and ripen under the sun. The farmers start getting it out of the fields into the curing barns,

stringing it on sticks and hanging it up on rows of poles socketed in the wall above two slim adobe furnaces. After working all day men must stay around the barn at night attending to the heat and watching the thermometer. They go for weeks under a heavy strain sleeping almost none at all. But around the barn at night the air cools off with the dew and the negroes begin to pick at battered banjos and sing tired little songs. People stretch out on the ground and look at the stars, and scratch themselves like coon dogs. They talk and eat watermelons and pray to God.

When the leaves are cured to a dark yellow or light brown color they are taken out of the barn and unstrung from the sticks. Then they are packed in cribs and wrapped securely against the midday heat and the evening cool. This is called "getting it in order." When the harvesting slows down and when the last barn is curing out, the women folks and children unwrap the piles of yellow leaves and begin to grade it, sorting burnt leaves from green ones and torn leaves from long thick wrappers: cigar tobacco. When it is graded and the sand shaken out, it is tied up in handfuls. Then it is packed up in wagons ready to go to market, ready to go on the auction floor of the warehouse in town. The people look out over the fields where their backs have bent for months and see rows of stubby plants, shorn of their leaves, and they wonder if living is worth the sweat. But they are ready now for a few weeks of ease while the tobacco is being sold, a few days of queer pleasure before the hay has to be cut or, maybe, the cotton picked.

About the middle of August housewives in town are awakened by heavy wagons rumbling through the streets: the farmers are arriving from all over the country, getting in town early to try for the best places on the auction floors. The wagons are loaded down and the tobacco is covered with burlap sacks sewed together, or bed-quilts in insane designs. People walking along the street can smell the tobacco. The smell begins to twine around everything in town.

The markets along the North and South Carolina state lines are called "border markets." This is where the bright yellow-leafed tobacco is sold. The warehouses are built of wood, cypress and pine. They cover acres. On their floors a million pounds of tobacco may be auctioned off in one day. This town has a population of only one thousand in the winter time but during the tobacco season there are days when ten thousand people walk on the streets. Like giant hay-barns the warehouses stoop along the side streets.

In front of each house barkers wave their hands and shout, "Drive in. We got th' first sale. Unload yo' wagons right now." Of a sudden two barkers will attempt to persuade the same man to come in and when the farmer makes up his mind, the two guys fall on each other like wasps. The planter drives his wagon inside and his tobacco is weighed and placed in a wide flat oak basket on the floor. The piles stretch across the house, lined up like soldiers. Sale time comes, and the auctioneer, surrounded and followed by buyers from the big cigarette and cigar companies, goes up and down the rows, singing prices in a slow metallic voice. The fruits of a half year's dreary toil is disposed of in a split minute.

The streets are weighted down with people. They got some money now and, by God, they mean to get rid of it quick. Everything is cocked and primed for them. There are men going about beating on drums to attract a crowd so they can sell them some medicine. There is one damned fool who sells a medicine made from swamp-herbs and he says it will cure everything from the French-sickness to the belly-ache. On a side street a small circus has unrolled its tent and sent its women about the streets strewing circulars and wisecracking at the farmers. A merry-go-round with a splintered calliope begins to whirl slowly. Hotdog stands, with Greeks, Turks and Darkies behind the kerosene stoves, sift their greasy smells into the street. Darkies sun themselves on benches in front of a row of cafes: nigger cafes, smelling of shipped fish and brand new corn whiskey, fresh from copper stills in deep swamps.

Out of the belly of one of the cafes a stout slick nigger woman moves herself to the door and shakes a dinner-bell and shouts, "Come on boys. Get yo' fish and peas." A puny negro in ragged sailor breeches—a Virginia mulatto, almost white—comes down the street sobbing, twisting his thick lips with a low moan. He worked on a truck with three other niggers, all black as stoves. He acted too high and mighty, and they didn't like his airs, so they beat him up. His face is bleeding, one ear is torn almost off and an eye is shut tight. The toad-like negress, swinging the bell, sees him and calls, "Come yeah, boy. How yuh get huht? Come on honey and le' me doctuh yuh." But the man gives her a look like a snake's, and says, "Goddam yuh!" She is black too. He goes on down the street, shaking with an angry moan. The woman does not mind his curse. "Po' feller," is all she says.

A drunken negro girl, with powder and paint on her yellow face, comes up to the cafe door. The woman with the bell casually shoves her back into the street. "Go on, go on. No room fo' you in heah. Go on home befo' Mistuh Charley sees yuh." Mistuh Charley is the policeman. One of the bucks sitting on the bench, yells to the gal, "Come ova' heah, Belle, and set with us." But Belle puts a hand to her nose and twitches her fingers at him. She walks on down the street, happy, holding her whiskey as well as a nice old lady.

In the street a horse trader is singing a song about mules. "Last call for the big horse and mule sale right around on Bulldog Alley, fine Tennessee and Kentucky mules sold for the highest dollar." A boy leads three stud-muscled mules; the trader, a young fellow with a hard blue face and a cigar in his mouth, turns to him and mutters, "Damn these people! They ain't got no money."

On a sandlot a side show has unloaded. On the back of a platform on which a showman is making a speech there is a splotched cloth sign with dancing women painted on it and lettered under the picture JOHNNY SPRAGUE PRESENTS NANA FORDE IN THE DANCES OF ALL NATIONS. A crowd of weary people slowly assemble around the platform. Their eager faces have faded and the day has become tasteless. The showman is talking, moving his face: "Gentlemen, this here is a show that is educational to the fullest extent. You will learn things here you never thought of, and remember to your dying day. Friends, I got a show here what shows how they dance in all the principal nations of the world. Maybe you heard the soldier boys talk about how they dance in France. Well, we got it all inside. We got Spanish gals and Russhun and we got a little French woman who's gonna come out yeah in a minute and perform fo' yuh. . . . Hey, Nanny, come on out yeah. . . . Now don't crowd, boys, and when she comes out I'll open this do' and start sellin' tickets. The woman does not answer so he sticks his head through a flap in the tent and calls, "Dammit, Nan, git ready and come on out!" A woman in a white bathing suit, with silk stockings rolled up at the knees, showing legs brown with dirt, comes out on the platform. She smiles quickly to the men, places her hands on her hips and twisting her stomach, walks jerkily up and down the platform. Men stir in the crowd, but they do not buy tickets. The showman starts his talk again, "Now, gentlemen, come right up and purchase yer tickets. We got a big show inside of great educational value. Not a moving-picture, not a hootchie-kootchie, not a side-show, but a series of genuine dances by

little gals what know how to do it. Men, I got a woman inside what can shake like a pennant hung out in the breeze. Come on up. Twenty-five cents and worth every penny of it. Come on up!" But the farmers are weary, weary. They only move uneasily in the crowd and gropingly watch the woman. The sun presses down and men pull off their hats and run a finger around the sweatbands inside. They are sweating like so many sponges. They are eager for their checks so they may do their trading and go on home. The showman looks them over nervously. He hasn't sold a single ticket, and they're only twenty-five cents apiece. "Gentlemen, I won't have this show heah tomorrow! I got to be movin' on. Tickets only two-bits. Come on up!" The woman has gone back into the tent and the men move away, one, two at a time. The showmen gets an amazed look on his face. "Say," he says, "Whatsamatter with you guys? Yuh got the pip?"

A blind man, sensing the crowd, has placed his campstool near the showtent and, holding an umbrella over his head, mumbles, "Help the blind. Good folks, do not pass me by." He holds a tin cup supplicatingly.

The Darky cafes are vibrant with the sketchy, halting music of automatic pianos and with the smell of salt fish frying on redhot stoves, and the steady dead noise of tin forks touching heavy crockery. Inside the warehouse smells hang low like smoke in a kitchen: the tobacco smell tangles around everything; there is the smell of cypress lumber, of melting tar on roofs. The smell of sweat and negroes seeps through the air. Mules, hitched to heavy wagons, stand in driveways. They move their tired hoofs in the dust and twitch their noses at the flies. The eyes of the auctioneer are bloodshot and he beats on his knees with a newspaper rolled-up. The warehouseman calls to the buyers, "This is smooth tobacco, boys, pay for it."

There are three old farmers sitting on their piles of tobacco, arguing about two men who want to be president of the United States. One man says: "Ol' man Archie walkin' aroun' town like he got first mortgage on the county say he gon' vote for Hoover."

"Yeh, Hoover says he'll help the farmer. Loan us money. Keep us goin'."

"Who the hell wants anybody to loan 'em money. Whyn't they pay us for what we make. Work in the hot sun all th' summuh while they set on their behinds doing nothin' but talk. Goddam 'em all!"

"Smith says he'll start up coöperative marketing. Get th' right prices fo' our stuff like that."

"Yeh, Yeh. I tell yuh right now, boys. None of 'em gon' do anythin' fo' th' farmer. May as well vote fo' the one as the tother."

"Yeh, that's right, Jim. Farmer works hardest and gits th' rear-end of everything."

. . . In front of every warehouse there is a line of rickety benches. On them sit women and children, white and colored. They flatten tobacco juice on the sidewalk, eat strawberry ice cream cones and hot-dogs and halfheartedly talk of their lives. "How yo' folks, Lulu?" "Well, we jus' common. Move ovah, chil', and let me set. Can yuh spare me a lip o' snuff? Bad 'bout Annie's man, ain't it? Yeh, put him on the gang. Drinkin' an' cuttin' up and they caught him. An' he was good to Annie, won't he?" Mothers with the life creeping out of their bodies with the seasons, hold babies softly in their warm arms and croon, "Be quiet, honey. We goin' home soon. Goin' home soon, honey babe." A small boy sitting beside his mother, holding a crying child, says, "Ma, why'nt yuh give th' baby some ninny?"

If a guy took time to look through a window into the street he'd be bewildered by the shapes of the people that pass: their twisted bodies, warped and shrivelled by the weather and the crops; crippled by the cotton gin and the sawmill and disease and the fumbling hand of the midwife. There are dwarfs and hunch-backs. A sad king could find enough jesters here to amuse a dozen courts.

Wagons filled with the dried-out leaves of this weed with the slow, insolent smell, move through the streets. Big motor trucks ease by loaded down with hogsheads of packed-down tobacco and horns quarrel with each other like screech-owls on a warm evening. Way into the night the smart-mikes stand with the warehouses at their backs, yelling, "Drive in, dammit, and we'll unload yo' wagon right now!"

Fetish

By Peter Gray

I want shoes
 Red shoes, blue shoes
 Old shoes, new shoes
 Some shoes, two shoes
I want shoes
 Green shoes, gray shoes
 Night shoes, day shoes
 Go shoes, stay shoes
I want shoes
 Live shoes, die shoes
 Love shoes, lie shoes
 Your shoes, my shoes
I want shoes!

Epitaph For a Wise Virgin

Here lies one of mind too wary
So poised betwixt the poles of life
Amor and Castitas grown chary
Have in her bosom ceased their strife.

M. B. M.

Sonnet to a Demented Author

By JOHN MEBANE

He smoked his pipe and stared at empty space
Forgetting that his necktie did not match
Exactly with the thin and lonely patch
Of ruddy hair above his vacant face.
Relentlessly he thought with awkward grace,
And often when a new idea would catch
Him unaware, he seized his pen to scratch
A note of it in some convenient place.

He was not mindful of approaching night,
Nor could the ringing of the dinner bell
Arouse him from the melancholy spell.
He always sat there in his chair despite
The fact he never had the chance to write
Until they led him back into his cell.

The Man in the Black Cloak

By J. J. Slade, Jr.

"His story disturbs me, Miguel; I don't tell it—it sounds unreasonable." That seemed to be all that I was going to hear that night about the fate of Pancho Menocal.

"Out with it," I said encouragingly, "I promise to believe you." But many glasses of cognac disappeared between us before Pepe Alton, whom we called The Narrator in the old days, would tell me what he knew of the circumstances connected with the death of our old friend.

As the golden liquid in the bottle before us diminished Pepe told of the uncertain days of the first revolts; days of trouble which I had been fortunate enough to spend abroad. He paused to light a cigarette, and then continued:

"As I was saying; it was not till two years later that I returned. The morning was beautiful, as mornings can only be in this valley. I had nothing to do till the afternoon so I left my hotel to take a stroll along the Paseo. I walked toward Chapultepec thinking only of the munificence of God. . . . "

"I bet you were." Pepe reproached me with his eyes, and I asked his pardon.

"As I walked on, distracted by the beauty of the morning, I was accosted by what I took to be an old man begging for his bread. I had put my hand in my pocket to get him a coin when he said, 'How are you, Pepe?' and I looked up, surprised beyond words that this man should know my name. Never, Miguel, have I experienced such a feeling of pity commingled with a thousand other emotions as I did when I recognized Pancho Menocal standing there before me. . . . "

"But you said an old man. . . . " I began to interrupt, but the next instant I bit my lip. The cognac had worked. I would hear about Pancho. I must be quiet. Pepe continued:

"Yes, there before me stood Pancho—I knew it was Pancho—but his hair was white, his face piqued and wan, and his unkempt clothing hung loosely over his emaciated frame. Yet I knew that it was

Pancho; the ghost of his smile still lingered in his face; his eyes, though searching restlessly for things beyond the border of human sight—it seemed to me—were still his eyes."

A thousand questions came to my mind. A thousand explanations were required by my excited curiosity. But I dared not interrupt; and he went on:

" 'Pancho!' I exclaimed with God knows what tone in my voice.

" 'Don't be horrified. It is I. I assure you that I am not dead yet, though I soon will be.' His voice was weak but it retained its old resonance. His smile strengthened a bit, and something of the old twinkle came to his haunted eyes.

" 'I'm awfully glad to see you, old boy,' said I embracing him; there seemed to be no flesh between the skin and bones of his back. I led him to a secluded bench, and there we sat the rest of that morning.

"No sooner had we settled down than Pancho began to talk; he seemed glad of the opportunity. And you can imagine that I listened silently to his most remarkable tale. He asked me no questions about myself, but immediately began in words like these:

* * * * *

I know that you can hardly wait to hear what happened in the past two years to change me into what you see before you. I am going to tell you as faithfully as I can a strange sequence of events which—and this may help to prove my sanity—I can hardly believe myself.

If you should repeat my story, the man of science will say "Paranoia," and the theologian will find a moral justification for the manner in which four lives, at least, were ruined by an enigmatic fate. Bah, a lot they know! But, Pepe, I am not telling you this that it may be preserved as a lesson; that another such catastrophe may be averted—damn it, Pepe, it can't be averted. You'll see.

I haven't seen a friend in so long; I want to talk. Just listen. You will say that my mind is diseased. I cannot convince you that it is not, for I cannot convince myself. This much you must admit; that my suffering has been real. Now listen:

Two years ago there was no happier man than I in all the Republic. You remember with what rejoicing Angela and I announced our approaching marriage and how you, my friends, regaled me with banquets and festivities. Long before the day that the wedding was to be I gave up my paramours and my unconventional friends as every man should do—at least for a while—when he is about to marry a saint such as was my Angela—and is.

But there was one, Isabel, a girl of humble birth but with the charms of Heaven's queen, whom I could not quite give up. Pepe, the child loved me as few men have had the good fortune to be loved. And I, too, adored her, though her station in life was too far below mine for the admission of such love. When I told her of the approaching nuptials she smiled at me and wished me happiness, but through her heaving breast I could feel the rending in her heart. Ah, Pepe, that was the beginning of my suffering.

I resolved never to see her, but having kept away from her drab little room on the Calle de la Acequia for nearly a week my resolution broke, and one evening I directed my steps to the squalid house in which she lived.

My peace of mind was disturbed as I climbed the worn steps that led to the floor on which was her room. What was I to tell her? How was I to excuse this weakness to myself? Was this not breaking faith with Angela too soon for the sanction of Heaven?

I gently pushed open the door to her room and walked in; there in the orange light of the carbon lamp was Isabel, but—oh, a jealous rage nearly blinded me; she was held in the arms of a tall man. His back was turned to me; I could see only the graceful folds of the black cape that hung over his narrow shoulders. His head was bowed forward and his face was buried between the breasts of my mistress; her arms hung limp—she was held up high in his embrace.

I moved toward them but my approach remained unnoticed. There on the night table beside them flashed the immaculate blade of the slender dagger which Isabel had told me was for unfaithful lovers. I took the dagger's hilt in my hand—now, Pepe; I'm all right. A devil possessed me; I was blind with rage. I took the dagger in my hand and drove it with all my strength into the middle of the man's back. The motion of my hand was not arrested; the dagger entered, and the body collapsed, taking me with it across the bed.

Pepe, I cannot describe the horror that I felt, on pushing myself up, to see that the knife was burried to its hilt in the soft bosom of Isabel. She lay quite still, and the blood gushed out and glistened under the meager light. I stood up and stared helplessly at her lifeless body; then my heart froze within me—where was the man? I looked up and a great panic seized me, for there he stood, on the opposite side of the bed.

I said he wore a cape? Yes, he had on one of those cloaks which we remember our fathers wearing—those cloaks that are sometimes

now worn by old men and by some eccentric younger ones. But you know them. That was what I first became aware of, but what caused the panic in me was the face. It was the face of a poet; pale, finely cut, topped by long, black, wispy hair which fell over his forehead and shoulders in careless disarray; the eyes were large and dark and penetrating. And now, Pepe, as I looked at him his face twisted into a diabolic smile; he bared his teeth in a grin of death.

Ah, Pepe, I cannot tell you what fear overwhelmed me when I saw that grin. I forgot the woman whom I had killed. I turned and fled through the open door into the dark world. I ran till my breath gave out, and then I walked until, at last, the air and exercise brought calm to my troubled senses, and I went to my house to think over what had befallen me.

I thought of the scandal that would result from my crime; of poor Angela's grief; I even thought of the dead Isabel; and no sleep came to me that night. What should I do? Was there any appeal for me? Should I give myself over to the police? I decided to wait for matters to run their course.

The morning papers revealed nothing of the crime. I was debating whether I should go to Angela's when I received a note from her asking me to cancel our meeting that night as she was not feeling well. This relieved me, for I was in no mood to speak to anyone. The evening papers told nothing of the tragedy. Poor Isabel; was no one interested in her welfare? Did no one miss her? How long would it be before someone entered her room? How long would the tragedy remain undiscovered?

In the next morning's paper, in the second section, I read of the mysterious death of an unknown woman who was called Isabel Chavez by her landlady. There were no clues to the murder. It was the same old story, said the police, of a jealous lover avenging a trespass on his rights.

I felt better. No one would ever know that I had done it. I 'phoned to Angela and found that she was still indisposed, but she told me that she could receive me a little while that night.

And that night, with a lighter heart than I thought I could have ever had again, I walked to see my promised bride. I knocked at the door of her house and waited impatiently while the porter loosened the chain and turned the latch—you know what pains they take with their doors here, especially in times of disturbance.

Finally the door opened and the tall porter moved to one side to admit me. He wore a long cape, which made me look into his face; it was the face of the man whom I had left in Isabel's room. As I recoiled the features twisted into the diabolic smile that again sent the panic to my heart.

The sight of the man robbed me of all my courage. With a stifled cry I turned and ran down the deserted street until I came to a startled policeman who go in my way.

"Murder! I have been attacked there," I said waving my hand in the direction from whence I had come. I stopped beside him! I could hardly breathe from the fright and the strain. The policeman blew his whistle, and two or three others came up hurriedly on hearing the signal. "Yonder, around the corner," I said, and I made my escape in the ensuing commotion.

From the safety of my room I called up Angela to tell her that I had been detained, that I was ill; anything would I say but I would not risk another meeting with that man in the cloak. A servant answered the 'phone and said that Angela was very ill, that the doctors did not know what was her trouble. She seemed surprised that I should ask about the porter. Why, it was Daniel, she said, the same old man who had been there for twenty years. I thanked her and hung up.

That night the thought of the porter and Angela's unexpected illness disturbed me. What was this man? He had powers beyond those of the men I was used to. Had not my dagger pierced through his back and into Isabel's bosom and left him standing intact? But no, that could not be—you see that I'm not mad, Pepe—No, I did not see what I did that night; the rage of my jealousy blinded me. Still I could never have killed that man; for me he was unconquerable. That smile would disarm me. Had he not seen me through his back that night in Isabel's room?—perhaps he saw me now. I shook with fright at the thought and buried my face in my hands, and a new thought came to me—that he might come through the closed doors; through the walls themselves. I shrieked and leaped to my feet. Standing before me was the faithful Anastasio, startled beyond words.

"I fell asleep in my chair," I told him, "and I had bad dreams. You scared me when you entered so quietly. Oh, Anastasio, I am sick. Stay in my room tonight, I may need you."

Angela's condition grew desperate; she was rapidly wasting away —mind and body. The doctors disagreed. And two days later she

died. You remember—she died. My state of mind was such that I felt relief on hearing of her death. I called up Marcial and asked him to stay with me for a few days—I told him that I could not stay alone, that I needed his company through my grief. He marveled that Angela's death could have had such a reaction on me; he wondered at the greatness of my love—and I let love take the credit.

But with Angela's death my tormentor seemed satisfied; his pallid face with its death-like grin came no more to haunt me. With the passage of time I regained my composure, and though my actions were repressed I came to enjoy life again—though in a milder fashion than was our wont in those days, Pepe. Once, indeed, I found a little wench who called herself Beatriz who once more gave me a taste of the delights of love. There was nothing very attractive about her, save that she was a genial girl, as those of her kind generally are. But the pantomime of love we both enacted filled a desire in my empty heart.

One night as I hastened through the dark, narrow street to meet an appointment with my love, I was plunged back into my former terrors. In the bluish glow of the archlight, at an intersection, stood the man in the cape. His back was turned to me so that I could not see the fiendish face. Slowly I turned about; noiselessly would I go away so as not to attract his attention. I tiptoed back; then the thought came to me—the terrorizing thought—that I was being seen, that the grin was on the averted face; had I not been watched that night when I killed Isabel, though the man's back was turned to me? I screamed and ran, then I stumbled on the curb of the next street and fell. I dared not look up for I felt that the man leaned over me and grinned. I lay face downward on the stone walk and screamed. My cries would keep the fiend away until help came. A crowd of people was around me. I feigned madness; I was ashamed, frightened; I begged for a cab and went home.

To my former terror was now added despair. What was the meaning of this apparition? Would this man never leave me? Would he harm Beatriz? He did not know where she lived—but, oh! this man knew everything. He had been waiting for me in that street. Like Angela, like Isabel, Beatriz was now doomed. But why? That night I sat in my living room and fortified myself with cognac. I kept Anastasio with me; I dared not stay alone.

With the coming of the dawn the accumulation of the strong drink threw me into a stupor from which I did not come out till late that afternoon. I felt that harm was coming to Beatriz and that I must

help her. With the aid of God I could save her—no, Pepe, I'm not mad; that is, I don't know, but listen. Let me finish; I am not trying to convince you.

I felt that harm was coming to Beatriz—I was sure of it; had not this man from hell come to me only when he meant to harm my darlings? I called Marcial but he was not home. I had no clear thought of what I meant to do—I don't know now what I would have done—but I needed someone to help me. With Marcial I could go to the girl's house and bring her away, place her in a convent, in an asylum, anywhere away from the reach of that man in the black cloak. I must find Marcial; I would go to the cafes that he frequented. The night was still in its beginning and he would not be hard to find.

I bathed and dressed; the freshening of my toilette lightened considerably the load on my heart. It was with a rejuvenated feeling that I went down the steps and opened the door—but I did not step out. Before my open door, in the shaft of light from the hall, stood the man with the sickly face and the wispy, black hair whose awful grin pulled my soul to hell. I yelled and slammed the door. Pepe, Pepe, I tell you that I'm not mad. Don't fear me; look at these arms—could I harm you? Ha, ha! No, Pepe, I'll be calm. Damn it, man, I have nothing to fear out here in the sunshine, sitting by you, old Pepino. What was I saying? Ah, Anastasio came to my aid, did he not? I don't remember. I was in bed so long after that. All my friends were gone; you know how troublous the times have been.

When I was able to leave my bed Anastasio used to take me for walks in the streets. I kept him always by my side. We always walked in the sunshine. Thus, during the period of my convalescence I spent tranquil hours here in the Paseo and in the Alameda watching the people go by. My illness had left me weak, so I sat in the warmth of the sun. Beatriz? Ah, yes. I did not tell you of Beatriz? Well, Beatriz died. Anastasio investigated for me. He says that she died of a wasting illness. But that was while I was sick.

Now I was feeling well. I was sitting in the Alameda watching the people go by. Before me passed a girl—a pretty girl of the proletariat—and it pleased me to look her over. Our eyes met and I smiled. She averted her gaze; a teasing smile made her full lips quiver. Once more I felt the excitement of the siege of love. Now I was well indeed. But behind the girl there walked a man who wore a long black cape. He attracted my attention; his pale, thin face twisted into the hellish smile I knew so well.

I stood up to run and Anastasio held me back. I struggled to leave that haunted place but he detained me until a cab stopped for us. Neither the daylight nor Anastasio's presence could save me from that devil now.

That was two weeks ago. I dared not leave my house. My sleep was fitful and my nerves on edge. One night Anastasio gave me a sedative, and a short lull came to my turbulence; I dreamed pleasantly —I saw the people in the Alameda, and I saw the girl with the quivering full lips. Something made me awake. I shrieked and pulled the covers over my face, for there by the door of my room stood the man in the cape. No, Pepe, it was not my imagination. I tell you he stood by the door of my room and grinned at me. And even as I looked he turned into the hall. My cries brought Anastasio to my side. He said the house was locked, that none could enter. I had known it, Pepe, I had known it; that devil could enter through the walls.

What did I say? Ah, yes; that devil could go through the walls. But, Pepe, that fiend wanted blood. Do you remember I told you that when I first saw him he had his face buried between Isabel's breasts? I thought that it was an embrace of love, but Pepe, he was sucking her life as he sucked the life of my Angela and the life of Beatriz—as he wants to suck my own life away. Because I deprived him of Isabel by sending her to the unknown myself with the dagger? Who can tell?

But I have power over him, Pepe. I, too, can grin. Damn it, did you hear me? I, too, can grin. No, Pepe, wait, listen to the end.

Two nights later he came back. I awoke and saw him standing at the foot of my bed; right at the foot of it, Pepe. The devil was growing bold. He grinned and I grinned. No, I did not cry out again. I grinned and I burst out laughing, and he walked out through the door. I did not sleep—I was waiting for him; I wanted to grin again.

Last night I fell asleep but a great oppression made me awake. Leaning over me was my persecutor with the damned grin in his pallid face. I shook with horror—he was so close, you see—but I bared my teeth at him; I rose in my bed and the monster left the room. Do you see that I have power over him? See me; I'm all alone. I despise Anastasio's company. I am looking for the man in the black cape; I have a score to settle with him. I'm not afraid of him now—when I'm awake.

Some day he will get me, Pepe, because he will come when I'm asleep. Then I can't grin, you see. If I don't wake up I can't scare

him off and he'll suck my life away—as he sucked the lives of Angela and Isabel and Beatriz.

* * * * *

Pepe poured himself out a glass of cognac and drank slowly. Then he went on:

"When poor Pancho had finished this strange relation I accompanied him to his house. Need I tell you of the end? He lingered on some days, then one night, just as he had himself forseen, the man in the cloak came while he slept and sucked his life away."

There was honest terror in my friend's voice as he said these words.

"Come, now," said I trying to shake the eery feeling that his words had brought on me. "Don't you begin to talk that way. The man in the cape was a fiction of Pancho's deranged mind—you know that: God alone knows what happened in Isabel's room to affect him so. . . . "

"And if I tell you that I have seen that man since Pancho's death?"

"Now Pepe, you're certainly susceptible to the power of suggestion. Come, let's leave this place and seek other surroundings that we'll not associate with grinning devils."

It was quite late. But for us the long, glass inclosed corridor of the casino had been empty that night. But as I rose I noticed that at a table next to ours was a man. We had not seen him come. Now, as I arose the man rose too. He was a tall man, and over his narrow shoulders hung a cape. He looked at me, and his shapely features twisted into a grin that bared the teeth like the mask of death. I sank back in my chair and stared aghast.

"Where shall I accompany you to?" asked Pepe in a hushed voice as the man disappeared down the corridor.

"To your house," said I, "I shall not go out tonight."

Inarticulate

By H. T. McCone

I am no juggler of words; would that I were!
I am living a life, inarticulate.
This wild troubling in my breast, these fancies
Like faces touched by firelight, in my brain,
Must go uncaught. And the bright design she made
In the dark rich pattern of my life,
The world will never see . . . Oh God! one day
I'll bring the moon to earth, and with my hands
I'll mark her! And on a lovely lady set my seal!
And hear the echo of my voice in song
Go round the world!
And yet . . . the wide sea,
Holding galleons in her depths, and heroes' bones,
And strange green castles filled with stranger life,
Makes small sound on the beach; and only
In the rising wind gives hint of unguessed things.

Resolution

By Leslie Gordon O'Pry

I will not be as one of stone. I will
So pass my every day
That at ninety I shall still
Love to hear a morning lark say
Joyous things and see a sunrise fill
A sky with palest pink.

Sentences Put Down to Shorten an Afternoon in November

By Buck MacKellar

I tell her: I am sorry that once I loved you if now it must be like this

She is a woman I once loved and now her eyes and mouth and the full stride of her breasts have no meaning for me. Where once my eyes grew dark and my lips had words to say now there is nothing. My eyes are empty and her face is an echo of my emptiness. She says that our love was like a house burning down and mutters something about ashes, and I say yes, yes, but in me there is nothing I can call to and wake up. She does not sense what a waste of words it is to speak of this. There are words she must give to me. They are as sure to come as six o'clock and Sunday. Her face is a blur. Her face is like a window with frost on it.

The woman who crossed the street

She strides like a lithe man walking through ripe wheat. She is like a curve moving, caught, then let loose. She glances insolently at the automobiles and does not envy their swiftness. There is a smooth, ripened pride in her movements like a brown dancer vaulting beneath old palm trees. She looks as if she does not care for anything but motion, and her breasts move beneath her dress like oranges in a bag. She walks as if her hips are twisted into a knot and she is trying to wrench them aloose.

After the last drink and after the woman has gone away

You know the way flour looks when water is poured on it: that is the way I feel, and the room looks the way turtle soup smells.

Memory

By Lewis Alexander

Forget? God grant I may forget.
But ah, the tortured I;
While winding down the trail, regret
I can't but breathe a sigh.

You ask too much to say, forget!
When you have rent my heart;
And bleeding sores are open yet
From your rude arrow's dart.

Religion

By J. B. Brooks

I am getting old now
And soon I shall begin
To give some trifles
To the poor.

book bazaar

Un Nouveau Pigeon Du Ciel

The Bishop's Wife. By Robert Nathan. Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.00.

The Bishop's Wife, by Robert Nathan, is certainly one of the finest bits of satire that has come my way. Unlike most contemporary authors, Nathan appreciates the value of understatement. Once aware of this the sensitive reader will find the full poignancy of his writing completes itself in his own mind, rather than on the printed page. This is at once flattering to the reader and to the author.

The bishop finds his church affairs a trifle overtaxing. Indeed, only an angel from heaven could handle the perverse situations that confront and baffle his piety. Thanks to fantasy, the angel appears and assumes the duties of archdeacon. The over-zealous manner in which Michael, for so the angel called himself, took charge of the bishop's affairs, both clerical and domestic, forms the skeleton of the story. It seems that the bishop's relations with his wife had been primarily psychic. Michael, kind soul, takes it upon himself to remedy this situation also, not without some success.

There are two distinct lines of satire in *The Bishop's Wife,* marital and material. Nathan paints a painfully accurate picture of the murder of impetuous love at the hands of formality and prudery. He shows how vital love is and how rarely it can spend its vitality unabashed. The utter hypocrisy of the church comes in for its high share of censure when Michael secures a subscription for the new cathedral by resorting to the tactics of a bond salesman. He points out that it is a good investment. He secures another on the plea that the new cathedral will exclude twice as many people as the old.

Here and there, however, a *vignette* of sadness calls attention from the picture as a whole. The lasting charm of Nathan's book is that his cynicism is tolerant, and his satire a wise and gentle rebuke.

C. B. Wood.

The Latest Lincoln Epic

JACK KELSO. By Edgar Lee Masters. D. Appleton and Company. $2.50.

Edgar Lee Masters is like a man who has pushed the middle out of a target with his first bullet and, unable to score again, keeps pulling the trigger. On the jackets of all his later books one is made to understand that he is the poet of *Spoon River Anthology,* and that appears to justify anything.

This is a dramatic poem about Jack Kelso, who was a companion of Lincoln in New Salem. Masters makes him witness the flow of American history from 1831 until Today, and allows him to meditate in long soliloquies on the five wars which affected the United States in this period. Masters does not hitch up with the other 1928 poets and yodel about futility and secret sorrows, nor does he aim his pop-gun defiantly at the moon. Instead he says things about liberty and the purity of government in these United States.

Instead of being an epic of American life, as Masters intended it to be, *Jack Kelso* is the story of a friend of Abraham Lincoln. There have been perhaps five hundred unnecessary books about Honest Abe, and here is one more.

Joseph Mitchell.

Page from a Diary

A COUPLE OF QUICK ONES. By Eric Hatch. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company. 202 pp. $1.75.

November 15—

John M., with his usual generosity, sent me *A Couple of Quick Ones* the other day and mentioned the book was mine as usual if I'd pass opinion on it. He also noted that he knew I didn't know anything about horseracing, women-about-town, cursing, or the élite, but he figured as how I might know something about Bacchus and he wanted me to do the book.

Delighted. Took a couple of quick ones and started in to reading. Just thought how funny it is me writing my impression of Jones' diary—he's the guy in the book—in my own diary. Hatch hatches 'em up right along and every now and then I'm forced to give a guffaw at which one of these times my roommate (for purposes of lowering the rent) was sorting bills—to be collected from other people—and I set him back an hour's work.

This Martin Jones sure runs the ropes in Noo Yawk, and when he's not sleeping he's having a couple of quick ones. I'm not in love with the phenomenal way he recoups his fortune—but if I tell John he'll sneer and blurt some hokum about

life being more peculiar than story books. Anyway Martin gets mixed up in a stage party, has a couple of quick ones, and when he sobers up—really—a stage beauty has married him, actually, though he's in love with a banker's daughter, honestly. The actress raves about how her husband should ought to make some mark in the world beside and X, and Martin gets a job floorwalking in a ladies' underwear department at twenty-eight bucks a week and quits drink. Remember he's a sportsman and such, too. Well, after playing hide-and-seek with bill collectors for some time, he goes home one night to find the wife has vamoosed with a playwright, whose rotten—and bankrupt—play Martin has backed, and all the furniture except the refrigerator and the dorg. Then Martin's thoughts turn to a couple of quick ones. He's dead broke and in debt, but he has his pride and a bit of gambling nature and—well—he comes back and throws the third strike across Misfortune's plate. Anne Howe. Verily.

Quite an interesting diary in a way, and until Martin got a job and quit garter-snaking and boozing, I'd begun to think the editor had insulted me by giving me the book but I guess it's all right after all. Suppose I'd better go snatch off a favorable review of Mr. Hatch's opus now.

W. W. Anderson.

Verbal Snapshots

Day of Fortune. By Norman Matson. New York: The Century Company. 356 pp. $2.50.

My first impression of the *Day of Fortune* was that I had been delightfully tricked. I expected to read a novel—and I concluded after reading the first few chapters that it isn't a novel at all, but something uniquely better. Indeed, the book defies classification. It can best be described as a vividly poignant account of a cross-section of American life as represented by a group of individuals centering around one family circle.

The method is distinctly impressionistic, and the story, if there is a story, is told with an extreme objectivity in a series of brief episodes that might be termed verbal snapshots. The chapters are divided into sections that convey the effect of a series of dissolving views, reflecting the most indelible incidents and aspirations in the lives of the characters.

The first three chapters induce us to believe that it is Mary Aasen's story. At the beginning the Aasen family is traced from its roots in Norway until Mary's father sends for her to come to Chicago. There she passes through the adolescent period and shortly thereafter marries Knut Chezness, whose parents lived near hers in the old country.

But Peter, the first born, enters into the picture, and it immediately becomes his story. The episodes from the childhoods of the five Chezness offspring are sketched with a kind of passionate precision. They conjure up delicious reminiscences of boyhood days.

* * * * *

Peter dreamed of being a Merkin general. He was a sharpshooter, and slaughtered an army of redcoats. Once he and Jimmy decided to write a book of boy adventures. Peter beamed with the idea. "You see, we're kids and we know how it is. Men forget. They think it's all pie being a kid."

But the thickest writing tablet was not enough. Jimmy found a ledger like an atlas in his attic. They gloated over this wealth of blank paper, and thought how pleasant it would be when they had filled it with their adventures.

It began "We are two kids, Jimmy and Peter, and we have a shack in Kellogg's woods. We're both nine years old, but Jimmy is the oldest. Well, taking down our trusty Quackenbush 22, we went forth to shoot wild animals. Just then a big storm came. 'Holy Gee,' said Jimmy."

The days went by one way or another without anything being added to this. Mary, who had been much interested, asked how was their book? They said they could never get time to work on it. It was summer and they were happy again.

Pulling on his pants, Peter had a premonition, and groaned when he discovered that, as usual, they were on backside foremost. He tried, as he had often tried before, to twist them around without removing them! More bad luck!

Heinie suggested that they be chickens. He crowed and jumped off the shed under the plum-tree, flapping a horse blanket by two of its corners.

"If I practised I bet I could learn how," he told Peter. "You try it."

Next Heinie was a hen on a nest of burlap bags and shavings in the shed—the egg having been borrowed from the Tenowitz kitchen. Peter looked on from the doorway as the minutes flowed slowly through an atmosphere thick with the perfume of stables and of the roses on a ragged bush hanging on the fence.

"Eggs getting warm," Heinie whispered.

"Henry, you come home!" Heinie's fat mother called from the street. He was startled and sat flat on the egg.

* * * * *

Labor difficulties force the family to move to California. Young Peter has to go to work, and the admixture of dreaminess and pride which made his younger days a continuous voyage of discovery and hard knocks reacts on his working life. He gets a job in a drug store and then in a railroad office, but he is too much a drifter to stick long at any one thing. Finally, with his dreams of glory, he sacrifices a twenty dollar job for a five dollar one in a newspaper office.

Peter's numerous love affairs are depicted with an unusually sincere and sympathetic treatment. With Lita he had his first sex experience.

* * * * *

In Mrs. Pierce's bedroom Lita giggled and shoved Peter away when he sought to unlace her shoes. Because she had holes in her stockings, he thought, and did not insist. Undressed and under the covers, she said: "You're afraid of me." Peter shok his head. "No, I'm not."

But he was. At the snap of the switch darkness pressed down on them, and for a long time he did not dare to move.

Peter had thought love would be something wholly different, profound. Was he disappointed? Was it a little like looking into a drum, searching the noise? But as a wondering thought rose as a sigh, filling his mind, and was on the verge of making the words, Is this all? life took him and the question, unasked, dissolved. The long wait of innocence was ended, was as if it had never been. The night was a cavern, Lita's arm warm and good. There was a right-angle tear in her underskirt, and pinning this, she blushed and laughed. The blush made her more beautiful.

In the office Peter sat all day, his head on his arms, filled with an interesting, sinking pain that came with memories.

Women, having lost their mystery, were more mysterious.

* * * * *

The book is, without a doubt, worthy of serious consideration for a prominent place among the best literary works of the year. It invites comparison with Theodore Dreiser's *American Tragedy*.

Glenn Holder.

These Young People Again

THE CHILDREN. By Edith Wharton. New York: D. Appleton and Company. 347 pp. $2.50.

Mrs. Wharton has written a novel dealing with a vital question in the world of fashion and society—what is happening to the children who are the victims of the present system of inconstant marriages and easy divorces. The members of the younger generation are being brought up in hotels and on steamships; their education is neglected; they lack everything that goes to make a home and a background for a fruitful life. In spite of the wealth of their parents they are not nearly as well situated as the members of the middle class. As the author says of another side of their existence:

The little things have become a bone of contention, the taking or keeping possession of them is a matter of pride or of expediency, like fighting for a goal in some exciting game, or clinging to all one's points in an acrimoniously-disputed law-suit.

Although Mrs. Wharton proposes no remedy for these distressing conditions, she presents a searching study of the question as reflected in the lives of several people.

The story centers around Martin Boyne, a civil engineer with world wide experience, who, while on his way to Europe, meets the Wheaters, children of two of his old college friends, becomes intimate with them, learns of their conditions,

and tries to rescue them from the chaos of modern living where the parents are divorced. He learns that they are continuously disputed over in the law courts; they live six months with one parent and six months with the other. Since their parents have remarried they are fearful less the "steps," three children collected by the Wheaters from other marriages, will be separated from them. The group has sworn by "Miss Scopy's Remedy Book" (the source of all the nurse's cures) never to part. Martin tries to make a suitable arrangement whereby they may all remain together and have the advantage of an education. He is encouraged in all his efforts by Judith, the oldest, for whom he has quite an affection. He is appointed temporary guardian while Mr. and Mrs. Wheater have another dispute that leads to a second divorce. Martin is unsuccessful, and the children are eventually scattered over Europe—to live out a casual "hotel" existence.

The book is a decided artistic success; and, throughout, is a fine piece of craftsmanship. The whole is delicately and deftly put together; the mood and atmosphere are ably sustained; the style is pleasing. The author writes with a charm and subtlety that is captivating. The book fairly bristles with memorable sentences and apt phrases. The humor is spontaneous and relieves the situation at the proper time. The plot moves smoothly and evenly with the exception of a few instances where it seems to drag.

We feel that the author knows the people about whom she writes from a long acquaintance. From the ultra-rich, the fashionable, the social parasities, as it were, she draws her characters in clear cut lines. The picture of Princess Boundemonte is especially well done. Although she is a minor character, we know her as well as any of the major ones. We think, however, that Judith lacked just a little bit of being real. She is only fifteen, but talks and acts like one much older. We are always skeptical about child prodigies. This saying of hers struck us as particularly apt: "If children don't look after each other, who's going to do it for them? You can't expect parents to when they don't know how to look after themselves." On the other hand she exhibits enthusiasm which makes Boyne say of her, "What could be surer proof of her childishness than this suddenly revived faith in the future?"

The Children will receive a well deserved popularity. It is a thoughtful comment on one phase of modern life. It does not contain the elements of a great story, nor has it the qualities that will endure. It is a novel to be read for its style, its construction, and its art.

J. D. McNairy.

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A Not Too Casual Collegian

HILLTOP IN THE RAIN. By James Saxon Childers. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1928. 305 pp. $2.00.

Around a rather hackneyed theme Mr. Childers weaves a story of the aspiring literary light who all but expires under the necessity of having to earn a living before he finds readers who will pay for the support of his family.

Mr. Childers presents in a clear and straightforward manner this ambitious young author, Morgan Henley, ever hopeful, always desirous for a chance to continue his writing, but whose opportunities forbid realization. The reader sees the hero married and teaching, much against his will, in a small denominational college in Alabama. With the birth of a son, Young Henley faces more irritating and enervating financial difficulties; but he never falters.

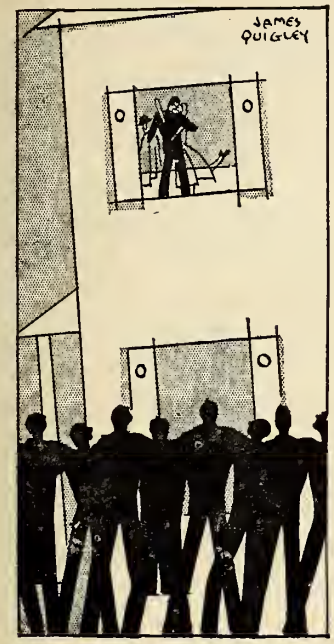
In Henley the author has created an imaginative personality, high strung, egotistical. Other impressive, clearly molded characters fill the picture, among them the old German bookseller, Unserheim; Dr. Brennan, President of Iron City College, in which Morgan teaches, anxious for him to replace Dean Ruffner, an old grouch failing to give satisfaction; and Professor Ketchum, whose theory is that "No man who has ability to create should play the intellectual nurse in a classroom," and who urges Henley while taking graduate work at Chicago to quit the classroom and continue writing. Sylvia Hernandez, Morgan's former college love, still hopeful, tries through every possible channel to help him by offering money which he flatly refuses. Around these dramatic situations, the author focuses his narrative skill.

Mr. Childers has written an original story with his usual craftsmanship. He has had opportunities for observations within college circles and presents in *Hilltop in the Rain* a story that is close to the experience of many.

Dick McGlohon.

Books Received and Books to be Reviewed

THE GOLDEN ROUND. By Frances Winwar. The Century Company. $2.
WIDE FIELDS. By Paul Green. Robert M. McBride & Company. $2.50.
THE NEW TEMPLE. By Johan Bojer. The Century Company. $2.50.
BLUE TROUSERS: The Fourth Part of THE TALE OF GENJI. By Lady Murasaki. Translated by Arthur Waley. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.
AMERICAN CRITICISM. Norman Foerster. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.
CASPER HAUSER. By Jacob Wassermann. Translated by Caroline Newton. Horace Liveright. $3.
LOVE. By William Lyon Phelps. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. $1.



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The Writers

Joseph Mitchell, whose articles on theatre work in North Carolina continue to sell and whose dramatic criticism furnishes the campus with such lively controversial material, again writes a "lead" piece for this magazine . . . Peter Gray adds another leaf to her light verse laurels; this time for those who know their *Psychopathia Sexualis* and this University, is preparing an article on the philosophic implications of the "new" theories of geometry for *The Magazine* . . . Lewis Alexander, a successful Negro poet, has for the past two years assembled the copy for the Negro Issue of *The Magazine* . . . John Mebane, Junior in the University, is a contributor to all the publications on the campus . . . M. B. M. (Margaret Beaufort Miller) is a student writer at the University of Tennessee . . . Buck MacKellar remains a literary obscurity from choice . . . Harry de Meaux Mechem, H. T. McCone, J. B. Brooks, and Leslie Gordon O'Pry are all first-time contributors to *The Magazine*.

Edited by JOHN MARSHALL

GORDON GRAY, *Business Manager*

The CAROLINA MAGAZINE

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BOOK BAZAAR

THE WRITERS

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Recalcitrant Student

By Jon Juanjean

Propped-up trees hide stars. Blackboards
Sneeze pedants' dissipated phobias
Dustily. I sneeze. Hide tears, yawns,
Behind pale inky hands. What are truths?
Shall quick savants with protruding feet
Bowdlerize the dead to flesh the leanness
Of a skinny Ph.D.? Toasted cheese to trap
Timid mice-minds. Never a voice like
A ship at sea that cries, "Your smile
The winter wind blows down the gutter
Of my mind like fallen leaves." Thanks a lot,
Sir. What is there to eat? Who cries me down?
Ha! I'd laugh and ho! For all the color is
But gray chalk-dust on numbered seats.

THE
CAROLINA
MAGAZINE

VOLUME 59 NUMBER 3

Peter, Pumpkin-Eater

By Dane Wilsey

Jerry was talking to his wife. Not only was he tired, but his bony fingers were twitching, and occasionally his mouth would jerk to punctuate his thinking. He had come home and laid his hat on a chair in the hall, and then he had gone into the back room and looked at himself with an assumed intensity in the mirror, which was dotted with little white specks from the carelessly painted border. Ordinarily he would have straightened his tie. It was pulled to one side and gaped a little at the neck. Now, as he talked to Helen, he fumbled at it with fingers that did no more than soil the collar. He was saying,

"I guess you're right. I guess maybe I've been kidding myself."

"That's all you think about. It doesn't matter that you've cheated me," Helen said.

Jerry was angry enough to want to soothe his own hurt in making her uncomfortable.

"Oh, you'd have found someone eventually. You're too much of a woman not to have. Perhaps you will anyway."

"That's a brutal thing for you to say to me, Jerry."

He was trying to lose control and show that he could be furious.

"So it's brutal, eh? And what do you think it is to me to have my wife tell me that after three years of living with me I'm not enough of a man for her?"

"Jerry!"

"Sure, I know. You've had a chance to find out what nobody had ever been close enough to find before. That's all it amounts to, but you're not the kind that would let it go at that."

What he saw in her face made him feel empty inside. His eyes looked very quiet, and his voice sounded as if his thoughts were tired. He pulled out his handkerchief and rubbed the bridge of his nose with it first, and then the two creases beneath the flare of his nostrils. He was speaking slowly, whining a little, trying to be soft with her.

"But you're right though. I know I'm not much. I wouldn't be anything at all if you didn't believe in me."

He waited for her to say something, to answer him in some way, but she was looking down at her lap and twisting the fringe of the tablecloth.

While she was getting supper, he went in back and lay down on the bed and stared hard at the cracked ceiling. He had never known so well before what it was to feel lost and cold and like a dried shell. He had been a gay enough fellow at college, and afterwards, when he had married Helen, he had done so with the feeling that he would always be able to carry her off her feet with the electric energy that had won her. It just hadn't worked, that was all; but that didn't make him any the less bitterly ashamed. He was glad that he no longer met any of the fellows that he had known so that they couldn't see what a mess he had made out of things. They wouldn't have much respect for him now. He didn't want to see people he knew any more—except John and Anne, but they were different. He went to see them whenever he was tired like this so that he could just sit and watch them. He had gone there that night before coming home, and it had helped him to see the truth about himself. He had sat way back in the big, rusty morris chair and watched them talk to each other and to him. He wondered whether it was because they had not been married as long as he that they still sat and made love to each other on the wicker settee, or whether there was something in them that he lacked. Finally it made him restless to watch them, and he said,

"You two are funny."

"Yes?"

"Yes. You take a lot of punishment, but you don't stop."

"That's because we love each other."

"Is it that simple?" said Jerry.

They had looked at each other for a long time, and that had been

enough of an answer for them. But Jerry had got up suddenly and had walked home so fast that he found it difficult to smoke his cigarette and get his breath too.

He was still lying and looking at the cracked ceiling. It wouldn't do. He must make a fight anyway. He wondered if he could pretend enough to fool Helen. He stretched himself, let his feet fall to the floor with a bang, and started rather softly to whistle a popular tune. It encouraged him to hear the sound of his whistling. He got up and looked at himself in the mirror again, whistling more loudly. It annoyed him to look so messy. He put on a clean shirt, dampened his hair, and combed it with long, even strokes. Then he took a bath towel and wiped away some of the water that had spattered on his neck and on the back of his clean shirt. He went into the front room, kissed Helen, and made a play at relishing her and the dinner that she had cooked for him. He felt that things were rather nicer than usual by the time they went to bed.

On his way home from work the next day, he again tried the effect of whistling. It came easier this time. He threw back his shoulders, lengthened his stride, and made quite a point of swinging his arms. The plate glass windows reflected his thin figure sufficiently well for him to glance over his shoulder and admire the sight of his new posture. He stopped before one of them, pretending to inspect the display of goods, while cautiously tilting his felt hat to a sharper angle. It would be nice to give Helen some sort of a surprise. Flowers or candy or something. Oh hell, that was too ordinary. She wasn't fool enough to be taken in by anything so crude. It would be best to treat her in a manly way, to be playful and gay, to get her excited and affectionate. His mind was trying to force his blood to race at the thought.

As he turned off the avenue into 10th Street, he was almost exuberant. He made all sorts of unnecessary motions that would exert his muscles. It was great to feel muscles working. When he reached the foot of the stairs his spirits overflowed, and, with a sudden burst of new energy, he sprinted upwards three steps at a time and threw open the door so that it chattered on its hinges. Because the room was dark, he had to stop and peer around a moment. Some gray shafts of twilight made the brass plate around the electric light button gleam dully. He could see a tiny white spark when he snapped the switch. Helen must be late; yes, she must be late, and he tried to smile at the thought. He knew that he probably looked very silly smiling, because it made his face stretch and tingle as if he had been riding in an open car all day.

If only the damned place wasn't so quiet! He coughed and made other noises in his throat, and then he walked into the bedroom like the brisk and noisy man that he wished he could be. He pretended that the piece of paper pinned to the clean shirt that lay on top of the dresser didn't interest him. He glanced at it with careless preoccupation. And then, in a moment, it was all over. He flung himself on the bed with the paper crumpled in one hand and stared with hard bright eyes at the spotted wall-paper. His tongue was scraping against the roof of his mouth and his whole body was filled with such a sense of frustration that he wondered whether he wanted just to keep lying there, or whether he would spit and kick his feet like a furious child. But because he was so empty inside, and because his thoughts and his body were thin, he drifted into a nervous sleep after he had lain there a long time, his face white and twitching in the dim light, and the breath coming from his mouth with a choked irregularity, like smothered snoring.

John and Anne had been almost too nice to him in the months that followed. He couldn't help feeling guilty about it sometimes, after the first apathy wore off and he was able to realize that, at any rate, *they* were alive even if he wasn't. But a sense of guilt alone was not yet enough to rob him of his new happiness. Every evening he would leave the small room that he had taken in another part of 10th Street and go over to see them, walking slowly with a sense of inward exhilaration, and with something of a smile twisting the corners of his mouth as he climbed the stairs. Then he would go in and seat himself in the big chair that he always used, listening to them tell him how much they looked forward to his coming. He hardly ever said much in reply, and his answers would consist of those expressive gestures which are felt to be sufficient. And so he would sit there and watch Anne cleaning up the dinner dishes, and sometimes he and John would talk a little, but never for very long, because John would keep getting up to go and kiss Anne or to help her in some small way. Jerry liked that, because it was then that he had a chance just to sit and watch them. Sometimes he felt queer though, when he saw how much they still loved each other. Sitting so still for so long a time that they would almost forget that he was there, he would look at them caressing each other and making love to each other until he became too consciously aroused, and he would remember that he was a man and that he had blood, even though it ran slowly. Not that they minded his watching them that he sat so still. He was still because then he could be detached, and they could too, and the whole illusion thus be heightened. He could sit and

wonder whether he was a man after all, and what kind of a fellow he must be to be content to live his life through others, to obtain from them that something which he could not reach down within himself and find.

After thinking like that, and after drifting for so long a time towards the realization of what he really was, it was funny that Anne should have suddenly taken it upon herself to try and help—help him in a positive fashion and not just passively. She knew what he would say and what he would think when she told him that Mary would make a fourth person at dinner that night, but she was willing to attempt it anyway and to stake a lot on the outcome. She tried to be careful and sufficiently feminine when she assured him that she loved him, that he should not be hurt, and that it was one of the few favors she would ask of him. Nor was Jerry at all taken in. He watched her with quiet eyes as she hesitated over each word, fumbled with the corner of her apron, and occasionally glanced away so that he might not have too good a look at her face. He said that she ought to know better and to know him better. He left her and walked 9th Avenue for a long time in a gray October drizzle, scuffling his feet nervously and hunching his shoulders upwards and forwards to shield the back of his neck. The prickling coolness against his skin antagonized him and made him angry for the first time in months. He did not know that he was angry and that Anne would have been pleased and happy if she had known it, because it would have shown her that he was no longer apathetic.

As he dressed that night, Jerry was still furious, partly because he had finally accepted the invitation, or rather, as he told himself, the obligation which he could not well avoid, and partly because he was not sure whether his anger came from a superior sense of bitterness towards all women, or from a fear of them. All day he had found himself thinking about the coming evening, wondering about it somewhat, and even becoming fidgety and upset. He would never show it, by God! But it annoyed him that his fingers were so clumsy in adjusting his collar button. He spent a long time combing his hair, and then, realizing with what concern he was treating the whole matter, he ended by knotting his tie carelessly and quickly, after which he proceeded to fuss with it surreptitiously for the rest of the evening.

While walking, he struggled to get his faculties together. He would take himself in hand and show them. He climbed the stairs, paused a moment at the top, and opened the door with a sort of blind courage. He threw his coat and hat upon the nearest chair and bowed vaguely,

taking care to look at no one of the three people present. Anne murmured a nervous introduction. Jerry shifted his eyes to the carpet and said distinctly,

"How do you do."

It was not even a question. Merely four chiselled words. Mary said nothing. She was inspecting Da Vinci's "Lucrezia Crivelli" which hung above a gate-leg table. Because she had said nothing, and because she was not looking at him, Jerry glanced at her. A little too full in the hips. Nice legs though. She ought to wear her hair longer. What the devil did it matter what she was like? He walked carefully over to the center table, unconsciously moving on tiptoe so that his shoes creaked slightly, and, in the midst of a general conversation, pretended to thumb the pages of the first magazine that happened to catch his eye. Finally, in a confused sort of desperation, he sat down and began to read it, saying nothing to anyone until dinner was ready.

Later they played cards, which of course Jerry hated because he had occasionally to look at Mary. He found that it was easy to do so without attracting much attention while they were all sorting their cards. It was like Anne to choose bridge as a diversion. She was so astonishingly inept. Jerry glanced from under his eyebrows at Mary. He liked hands that were transparent and nervous. Her dress was cut low, and when she leaned forward he could see the rise of her breast. He liked that too, but it was funny that he should be thinking about it. It quickened him and made him remember a lot of things that he thought he no longer cared about. He was afraid to think about her long, because his mind was too alertly sensitive this evening to permit him to feel so empty and so cold that he could be sure that he was safe. What would he do when the game was over? They would expect, or rather hope, that he would take her home. Well, why not? He squirmed in his chair with a little nervous shudder. Anne suggested that the wicker armchair would be more comfortable. Jerry was angry with Anne and with himself. Mentally, he closed his eyes and took the plunge.

"Excuse me a moment," he said, "while I phone for a taxi for Mary and myself."

His voice sounded very silly and stilted in his ears. He was sorry the moment he had taken the step, because it made him feel weak at the pit of his stomach, and after assisting Mary into her wraps and into the taxi, he sat in the far corner and brooded over his cigarette in

an effort to steady himself. She exhaled some smoke rather slowly and looked at him out of cold eyes.

"You have succeeded in being very disagreeable," she said.

"You flatter me," said Jerry. "I have never succeeded in anything."

She threw away her cigarette, and the words came over her shoulder.

"You were afraid that I might like you, and you were successful there."

Something was in Jerry's brain trying to make him say the thing he would have said once—the gallant thing, the obvious thing.

"That means that I have failed," he said.

She laughed. It was the only time that she had laughed all evening. It was the only pleasant thing that had happened. He liked it. She put her face close to his as he helped her from the running board and smiled at him quickly. Her voice had become strained and harsh.

"The funny part of it is that you think that you are lying."

And then she added.

"You can't really be the way you seem."

It surprised him to hear her voice like that. After he had dismissed the taxi and was walking home with his hands clenched tightly and thrust deep into the pockets of his topcoat, he kept wondering about it and about whether there would be anything more to come. He quickened his stride, swaying his head slightly in time with the motion of his body. The keen air made his brain excited and removed the dull confusion that had lain like a hot and cold compress upon his nerves. Because he felt stronger than the night, he wondered if he could become a man again and feel a man's delight in a lovely woman. He was setting his teeth, moving his muscles with a jerky vigor, forcing himself to think of her as lovely, to think of her as feminine, and then, with a swift, deep breath and a final toss of his head into the face of the night, to figure that he had a good chance with her and that maybe he did want to be successful after all. . . .

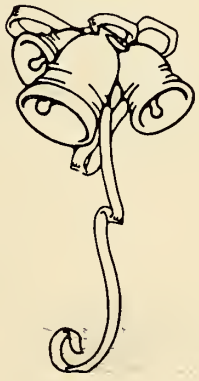
She hadn't given him too hard a job, but he had had to be careful at first. She was almost too willing, too anxious for the intimacy of which he was afraid, in which he dared not trust himself. That was why he had stalled her off about coming to his room. He hadn't yet been able to key himself to a point where he felt he could take the chance of being kicked out by his landlady and being made a fool of before Mary. But at times she had been difficult, and he had caught her looking at him in a way that he didn't like, so that he had been

forced to agree that they spend the night in a cheap hotel. She had handled it cleverly by making him think that he was suggesting the move, by putting him in the light of an ardent seducer. Not that she was scheming against Jerry. She was too honestly animal for that. But because she was honest and because she was animal, she was prepared to take him as a lover if she found him desirable.

Until after that night together, Jerry hadn't altogether realized quite how much she would mean to him. The next morning, when he left her, he thew himself into a day of activity. They had talked about France and about going there, and Jerry had planned it as if everything was answered, as if his life was answered. He was going now to attend to the tickets and the passports and the letters of credit, and then they were to go off together without telling even John and Anne. He knew how happy they would be in him, and in their success. He strode by the men that he passed in the street without seeing them as men, save as a reflection of his own manhood. He wanted to smile at people and to meet some friend of his so that he could grip the other's hand heartily and show how vigorous and busy he was. He had a woman, and he could hold up his head in a world of men who had women. He was proud because he was masculine, excited because she was feminine. And then he would meet her at the boat tomorrow, and that was the only thing that was important. He had a pull with Saunders in the steamship office, or he would never have thought of getting accommodations so soon.

He ran up the stairs to his room. There was a lot of packing to be done, and it would be a good idea to get that over with in a hurry. He was working himself into a turmoil of energy. As he pulled his suitcase out from under the bed and poured the contents of the bureau drawers upon the floor, he started to whistle. He would have to take that new necktie because Mary had liked it. There wasn't time to sort things out, so all his junk would have to go in. He was putting in his socks and pretending to fold each pair. It seemed foolish to take those old shirts. When the telephone rang, he paused a moment and then pretended to fold another pair of socks. The second time it rang, he got up. His knees cracked from squatting on the floor so long. He stretched them by stepping slowly towards the phone, raising his feet high and pointing his toes. He took down the receiver and said, "Hello," and stood there. Then he stood there for a while longer and listened to her voice say a great deal in short sentences. He put his head on one side and listened to the sharp click of the receiver when

he hung it up, and then stared at the little holes in the mouthpiece. Some of them had dust in them. He wanted to take a pin and to scrape them carefully. He wondered if any of the dust was in his mouth. He stepped to the dresser and looked at himself in the mirror, wiping his mouth very gently with an old handkerchief. Suddenly he sat down and began to touch his face softly with the tips of his fingers. He had wanted to be able to talk a lot, but he couldn't remember having said anything except that first "Hello." It was nice to have vitality enough to talk—and to keep women. Talking took a lot of vitality and so did thinking. The only thing that he could think about was John and Anne, but it was nice to think about them. He got up slowly, groping absently with one hand for his hat, while his eyes wandered towards the window. Mechanically he fumbled with his tie before he opened the door. John and Anne—yes, that was it. He wanted just to be with them, to be with them and sit very still, to sit still and watch them . . . and . . . watch them.



3 Poems

By Joseph Mitchell

THE WOMAN WITH BROWN EYES LOOKS THROUGH CIGARET SMOKE AT THE REHEARSAL

The shadowy sadness of dressing rooms in old theatres
and the aching strained madness of the actor who goes through
the door alone,
thinking of Hamlet and thinking of himself,
going through doors alone.

HOW COLD IT IS IN THE LANE

Cold in the lane and why does it please me, this new cold,
this once again cold.
It is support. It is cold fit to lean upon, and I know the
past is that which is over and I do not look up the lane.
Now I only feel how cold it is, and how blue the cold is,
and how cold it is in the lane.

WISDOM

If she should catch me
dreaming of how her eyes looked
through the wind and sun
of too many seasons ago
I would only whisper
convolvulvi is one name
for morning glory.

Quietness After Rain

By Joseph Mitchell

Since morning he had walked about the farm, following a trail which kept close to the swamp edge until it became lost in the sandy fields along the yellow river. Then insects began bothering him and he returned to the house. Now he lay sprawled on the Bermuda grass in the back yard, smoking a cigaret and thinking that he had changed a great deal in such a few weeks. He wondered what the change was. It was not physical and he didn't think it a spiritual change. He smiled when he thought of it being spiritual. He didn't quite know what it was. It was, however, that he felt older in a vague way. I wouldn't feel like this if I were in a city, he decided, and then thought that he felt no need for companions. He would not like to be in the presence of a woman. There was nothing he would enjoy reading, and it was the first time he had remembered that newspapers were made. Least of all did he want to see a newspaper.

It was becoming dark. The long shadows made by the chimneys, slanting across the housetop, were being blotted out. But he still lay sprawled on the grass. He liked the cigaret smoke curling upwards from his hand as if the ends of his yellow fingers were smoldering. Abruptly he thought that it would be pleasant to have a cigar or a tumbler of smooth whiskey, but the desire was faint and quieted instantly. He had bought whiskey and it was in the kitchen waiting. He did not want it. There was nothing he wanted very much, but to be still. He remembered that he had not got himself anything to eat all day, and that he had not washed his face that morning. He had slowly removed himself from the bed, got into his clothes and walked outside and had not gone back in the house. The memory of the way the day had been spent made him a little sad, but not for long. He turned over and lay nose downwards and would have fallen asleep had he not felt hungry.

There had been streaked clouds in the sky all afternoon. They were swept clouds, streaming with blankness, like a poor wash drawing. He wished it would not rain, but he did not care. There was the

silence in the house which eased him and made him restless at once. After supper he would sit on the porch and listen to all the noises in the night fading out. It was like watching all the water go out of a pond when the dam is pulled open. He did not want it to rain, but the clouds grew darker and spread out.

He stood up. He would milk the cow and then get something to eat. Water began to hit the earth as he slipped the latch and opened the barn door. It was dark inside, and warm. He put the mixed feed in a trough so the animal would eat and be still as he milked her. He liked the smell of the feed, slight smell of molasses and crushed grain. Large drops of rain began to spank the tin roof of the cow's shed, built on the side of the barn. The noise pleased him and made him warm inside. It reminded him somehow of many pairs of small dice being thrown on a hardwood gambling table, in a room with dim lights. He opened the door of the shed, and the cow shambled in, tossing her tail, and stood stiff-legged with her head in the trough. He washed her udder, dried it with the milk cloth and began pressing a teat. The milk spattered forth in a jerky stream and drummed against the bottom of the bucket. He did not milk like the negroes. They smoothly pulled the teat; he pressed it against his hand with the tips of his fingers.

The raindrops shattered to pieces against the roof, and the milk drummed in the bucket until it was a fourth full. Then it made a mellow sound; he could sense the milk foaming. Nice sounds. They satisfied him like the rattle of horses hoofs on a still cold night. He thought again of the day. Inconsequent, nothing had happened worth thinking about—he was pleased that it had been that way. He remembered thinking that his days were like the old plum tree in the backyard. He could not recall the explanation for the aimless simile. Perhaps it was that the plums on every limb had a different taste. His fingernails were hurting the cow's teat. She began to fling her tail about crazily. He finished milking, placed the bucket in the crib with the cloth over it to keep the flies out, and sat down on the stool to wait for the animal to be through eating so he could run her back into the stall for the night.

It was raining madly. He went to the door and peeped out. The water made the darkness unsteady and crinkly. A wind was shaking the trees. Suddenly a lightning flash lit up the barn-lot, clear as morning. He glimpsed corncobs, washed white, on the ground. The fields would not be dusty for weeks if this kept up. The swamps would be bloated with water and the fish would not bite. Rain came down in sheets, veered and shifted. The tops of the pecan trees danced. They

appeared to reach into the air, grasping, and then fall sideways, frustrated. The rain was beating them. They were trying to escape.

He opened the door to look out and the thin water swept in, covering his face, wetting his clothes. He put his hand out and the rain poured between his fingers and clung to them. He knew how restless he would become, watching the rain wash the air. He pulled the door to and went back to the cow. He wanted to smoke but he knew how stupid it was to light a cigaret in the barn. If a spark touched the oats or the corn shucks nothing in the world could put out the fire.

He would have to wait until it slackened before he could take the milk to the house. The rain streamed down the shingles and slammed against the tin. He was sure the cow should be through eating. He pulled at her halter but she would not move. There was nothing else for her to eat in the trough, but she stood still, moving her jaws. He kicked her again and again on the belly and she went lumbering into the stall. He sat back on the stool. Then he got up and went to the door. He was tired and wanted food. He wished the damned rain would stop so he could get the milk to the house. He walked back and forth. Dimly, he heard lightning sting and push over a tree in the swamp. He wanted to leave the place: he did not like being made to wait.

As if it had given out the rain slowed down, only a drizzle kept up. He got out of the barn and walked with fast steps to the house, holding the bucket off from his trousers. The drizzle wet his shirt and his hair. When he got to the house he placed the bucket on the low porch. Then, balancing himself, he leaped up on the porch because the steps were down. The house was settling an account with age and the weather. The door near dropped from its hinges when he went into the kitchen with the milk.

He strained the milk, pouring it through a cloth into a pitcher, and then washed the bucket. He finished the meal quickly. He did not like the feel of the silence which comes after a heavy rain. After a pause the drizzling began once more and the silence was shredded. The house was damp because the windows had all been shut down. He climbed the stairs to his bedroom, remembering that he had not latched the door leading to the pasture and the cow would be certain to push it open with her horns and walk around in the night. He shouldn't have kicked the animal. She would not stand still for him to milk if he kept that up. He searched his pockets for a cigaret, but he had none. They had been left on the grass where he had been all afternoon, and the

rain had torn them to pieces by now. He needed something to smoke. There was no tobacco in his other suit. He sat in a rocking-chair by a window, looking down at the road, cut into a thousand puddles, ruts flattened out, water shining. An automobile passed up it dejectedly, rain drops slanting across the glare from its headlamps.

The rain did not quiet him. It made him want to go away. It got inside him like throbbing music. But he sat beside the window with the lights off for an hour feeling a little chilly. He got into bed, turning from one side to the other for a long while, listening to the water slide down the shingles. He grew tired of it. Abruptly he threw the covers from him and sat on the edge of the bed, running a hand through his hair, longing for a cigaret, and recalling that the lost package had been almost full. Outside noises died unwillingly. It no longer rained.

Pulling on his trousers he walked downstairs and onto the back porch, barefooted. The moon had come out. He could see impatient clouds passing swiftly across the face of it. Through the wire-screen which enveloped the porch the moon seemed to have a broad ragged cross marked over it. The rain frogs were echoing from ditches and puddles. He could hear trees shedding rain drowsily. He was sleepy. He walked back upstairs, feeling no better and wishing to God he had a cigaret.

He would not be still on the bed, so he got up and went to the window again, but he did not want to look out the window. He walked around in the room, and nothing would quiet him: he could not be still. He went to a chest of drawers and pulled out the small top one. It was quite dark in the room. He took up a pistol and held it from him. It was solid and fitted so well his hand. It was a satisfying weight, like a tiny heavy weight the athletes hold in their hands. He put the pistol back in the drawer and ran his fingers through his hair, yawning. He was sleepy but he could not go to sleep. He did not close the drawer.

The house was still, but the feel of decay was in it. The knowledge that the roof leaked, that the front steps were down, that the boards hung together loosely, was powerful in the quiet darkness. He knew that the house was rotting down, that the farm was impotent. It was just one of those things he knew. He did not feel good. He felt like washing his face and combing his hair. He thought of the life between the walls and inside the boards, the slowest life he could think of: living in boards.

He went downstairs again, into the kitchen. The whiskey was in the kitchen. It was in a blue flask and it was yellow whiskey, yellow

corn liquor. It did not look pleasant. He was going to drink every bit of it. There was a pint in the flask.

He placed the flask on a table and went on the porch to pump a glass of water. He came back in and reached for the whiskey. His hand pushed it off the table, he clutched at it wildly, but the bottle hit the seat of a wooden chair, then fell on the fireplace and broke into pieces. The noise hung in the air and died out like the flush on a girl's cheek.

He cursed quietly and bitterly, and caught himself before he kicked the chair. He felt like a man who is kissing a woman and then the dream is over. He picked up the lamp, then put it back down again. He drank the glass of water, then he picked up the lamp and careful not to step on the glass walked out of the kitchen and climbed the stairs again. He placed the lamp on the table and rubbed his eyes. It was so quiet in the house. It was too quiet to imagine noise. There was nothing but quietness. There was nothing but the house and him. Both quiet, rotting with silence.

He went to the open drawer and picked up the pistol. It charmed him: the way the pistol fitted his hand. He held it up so the light from the lamp would shine on it. The pistol was a heavy black shape in his hand. He held it up higher and looked into the hole. He rubbed his thumb on the cock-trigger. But he only smiled, and put the pistol back in the drawer. It was so quiet and dark in the house.

He pulled the covers in shape on the bed and shook the pillow. Then he sat down again. The lamp light was not hearty and it went up and down. Shadows flowed on the wall when the flame inside the glass chimney moved. There was no noise outside except when the rain left the leaves for the ground.

He could not stand it: the silence. He got up and went to where the pistol was in the shadows. He took it in his hand and moved the bullet chamber so a bullet would be under the trigger. He pointed the pistol at the window and then fired it. The pane cracked and pieces of glass fell and made a tiny noise almost before the bullet exploded and there was thunder in the room which would not die down. The noise hung and smoke kept moving slowly out of the barrel. The smoke was like a rippled pennant tied to the end of the gun.

He laughed nervously and then he opened the windows and the door. There was a ragged small hole in the window with cracks going away from it. If he had used a lead bullet the whole pane would have been torn out.

He put the pistol back where he had found it and went to his bed shaking as if he had done something wrong. In his ears the shot was still being fired. The noise would not go away. He wondered what people would think of a shot sudden like that in the night. But he knew. In this countryside people drank and so if they heard a shot in the darkness way off they did not stir out of bed, knowing they would find out what the bullet hit soon enough. . . . If someone came running up the road to find out what was the matter he would go to the window and ask for some tobacco.

The gun powder smoke made a smell that went away slowly. It would take a long time for the room to be still. In his ears it was like a fairy bell ringing. He thought of the stream of fire coming out of the barrel when the bullet exploded and went through the window pane. That was all he thought of. The way he sat crouched on the bed one could just glance into the room and know that a pistol had been fired.

Dinner Without Words

Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon?
Dr. Faustus.

A crust of bread we broke together
And did our arms entwine
So canopied with starlit weather
Had ecstasy to dine.

While Sirius roved sidereal wastes
The Pleiadean seven
Saw lips mirrored in a pool
Quaff the cup of heaven.

M. B. M.

Third Street

By Lionel Abelson

I

Light falters and stumbles away, fumbling with nicotined hands for one more last puff.
Houses are frightened children, packed together, shouting, "Room, room, room."
Light stretches his yellowing body on a coffin bridged from the east to the west, vaulted
Into the sky. And the houses press apart, bellowing against the stink
Growing and spreading its roots deep in the blood of their bricks
And the bones of the rivets hold them, "Room, room, room. To breathe, not to gulp."
And light blows out his cigarette smile.

II

Only the skeleton of a city. Noises fled. Jazz dreams forgotten. Skin and flesh peeled.
Pavements licking their hurts. Steel rails girding their loins.
The constellations may not speak. Night stares silently. The choked air gurgles and is dumb.
A man stands beneath the lamp, scratching a light on his heel,
"Bitch," he says. The city groans, the stars shiver, the night palls, the wind bows its head, the man blows his nose.

Two Poem Portraits

By JOHN MEBANE

NIGHT

These blue pieces of day
curl fragilely and draw
away.

Into the night stars claw
Clamberingly.

And a yellow moon
ascends silently a flight
of shadows to guard night.

DAWN

A patch of dark curls
exquisitely, leaving strips
of jagged narrowness.

An orb of yellow hurls
Itself against the clouds, trips
And lies complacently.

The tongue of day devours
With monstrous gulps the darker hours.

The Nascent Knowledge

By J. J. Slade, Jr.

When a child thinks about the limits of space (and few do) it is hard for him to conceive of a boundless universe; yet, when his imagination takes him to the bounds that he has set he asks himself: And what is there beyond?—thus pushing the bounds a little farther. Later this child studies Euclid and he ceases to think. By the time he has attained manhood and joined several orders he can say with great conviction, "Sure, space is infinite. . . . If you start with a pair of parallel lines here you can go on for ever and ever and ever and they'll always be parallel. Any damn fool can tell you that." And, of course, he is right. Any damn fool can tell you that.

But some centuries ago there were some who were not damn fools and were, therefore, not so sure what happened to space and parallel lines after they got out of bounds—they saw that you can't go on forever and ever; you just say you can. The centuries rolled on and the St. Thomases persisted, but no solution came to their queries. Came a period of stimulating thought: Saccheri (though he never knew how much he had thought), Gauss, Bolyai, Lobachevsky, Riemann, and others showed to those who had the good will and courage to listen and accept that spaces other than Euclid's are possible. Now, Riemann's notions were the most ridiculous of all. Quite untenable; for he described a finite universe, and any damn fool can tell you that our universe is infinite. His geometry was most amusing. It was a pretty plaything for mathematicians. Oh, it presented great difficulties; but mathematicians like difficult things. They're crazy, you know.

While all this was going on another group of St. Thomases was wrangling over the question of absolutes. Was there a landmark in the universe, unchanging, everlasting, to which we could refer our petty somersaults? The scientific world grew bitter with dissent. All this would never do. Michelson and Morley set out to find the absolute by the most careful experiments. With great confidence they set up their apparatus; with greater confidence they read their results. Did they frown? They tried it all over again. They made sure. Then

they let an apathetic world know their results: That light impinges on a body with the same impact (pardon the word) whether the body be moving towards or away from the source of light. Does that mean nothing? Apparently not; the world shrugged its shoulders and kept on rolling. But there was great concern among the members of the upper crust of thought, for they had demonstrated, by virtue of a phenomenon called the aberration of the stars, that light could not act as Michelson and Morley said it did. Many a thinker scratched his head; then came Lorentz to the rescue: he advanced the theory that matter contracts in the direction of motion. This explained it, without itself being explained. The world heard and turned over a few times.

Then a man by the name of Einstein formulated his special theory of relativity, which he followed a few years later with a general theory. Wars and things were going on in this world; then, too, there were cars and shows and other fascinating diversions. No sensible man could stop to listen to all this foolishness that was being said about Einstein. In this theory there were accelerated fields with imaginary velocities instead of the old reliable Newtonian gravitational system, and the old familiar Euclidean space gave way to the fantastic Riemannian finite space. I have said that Riemannian geometry is not easy; the whole of the new theory was fraught with mathematical impedimenta. It was, indeed, mathematical in its entirety. So that most of the talk that got about concerning the new theory was foolishness—people did not understand it. Some accepted it only because it was quite in keeping with the revolutionary times: Sure, down with Euclid; to hell with Newton. This guy Einstein—he's the stuff!

Now, the only people who could accept this theory seriously and intelligently were the mathematicians. It is hard to translate mathematical notions into the languages of the street and the ballroom. Perhaps it is impossible to visualize a straight line that eventually turns into itself without turning—a finite but boundless straight line. And who can conceive of a universe which, though boundless, has a finite volume? But, for a long time mathematicians had been playing with Riemann. They had got used to those notions. They did not have to visualize anything; if their postulates led them to the conclusion that a three-dimensional space may be finite, that was that and that was all. You may be unable to see it; but you can't fool logic, you know.

And so the day has come when those who can think about it at all have accepted the theory. Oh, they don't swallow it whole. They pinch it here and push it there, but they generally agree that Euclid's

infinite space and Newton's force at a distance, with all their implications, have a very small chance of being the conditions that obtain in this, our universe. Those who do not accept it in some form or other merely admit their inability to follow the mathematical reasoning that leads up to it.

No great mystery involves this theory. Many volumes have been written about it, including a few good ones. But he who would decipher these volumes must first acquire some mathematical ability. Not too much; but he must learn to reason clearly and symbolically—to transcend the scope of mere words. And those who are unable to make the grade may rest assured that nothing will happen—the world will go on rolling as it has always done, and apples will fall as they did in the days of Newton. Why, then, all this racket?

Well, in the first place, that most interesting phenomenon we call light becomes more interesting. As every one knows, the speed of light is tremendous; now it seems that that speed is the acme of speeds, for nothing can go faster than light relative to any possible frame. Suppose that you and a friend could each attain a velocity just within that of light, and that you together with a third friend gathered at a certain place once morning to test your speeds and so on. Now, the minute that your friend who stayed on earth turned on his flashlight (towards the north, say) suppose you started after the beam with your maximum speed and, at the same time, your speedy friend started in the opposite direction (south) with the maximum velocity that his contraption could acquire. Assuming that all of you had the necessary instruments to record your positions and other things, you would find that the beam of light would be leaving you just as fast as the same beam would be leaving your friend on earth or the other friend moving in the other direction. Furthermore, though you would be going north at almost the speed of light relative to your friend on earth and your other friend would be going south at the same time, you would find that you and your speedy friend would be moving at a velocity less than that of light relative to one another. And, though you would notice no change in your condition, you would observe that both your partners had shrunk to almost nothing in a north-south direction, that their weights had increased tremendously, that their watches had almost stopped ticking, so slow would they be moving relative to yours—their actions would appear to you like a horribly exaggerated slow movie. And they would be noticing the same things about you and each other. At ordinary speeds these phenomena are not apparent; but there are

observable masses that attain great speeds, and these ridiculous things do happen to them.

Now suppose that you have a very powerful telescope and everlasting life. Then if you turn that telescope in any direction at all, but choose one (assuming it to exist) where your line of sight will be completely undisturbed, you will, of course, see nothing. But as your life is everlasting you are in no hurry. You continue to look through the eyepiece—then after waiting four hundred million years something appears in the eyepiece; it is a mass of hair (or a bald pate); yes, it is the back of your head. Your sight will have traveled the length of the straight line—four hundred million light years. (Sight does not travel, but never mind.)

Then suppose that a second flood would come, but that instead of stopping on the fortieth day it lasted a good deal longer. When a quantity of water had fallen equal in volume to a sphere with a radius of two hundred and twenty-five million miles no more could fall, for the universe would then be completely filled up. If under these conditions you were to point your telescope at random over a clear sight you would find that you would need to wait only one hour and twenty minutes (unless my arithmetic is as bad as usual) for your head to appear in the eyepiece. That is, the length of the straight line would have shrunk from its present magnitude of four hundred million light years to eighty light minutes. Space is a function of the gravitational field. The more matter that is concentrated at one place, and the greater the density of this matter the smaller the universe becomes. If there were absolutely no matter, then space would be Euclidean—a great improbability.

Time, too, becomes less tangible than we have been accustomed to consider it. The same two events that are simultaneous from one system are not so from another. And so it goes.

Minkowski has identified time with the fourth dimension. To us—for incomprehensible psychological reasons—the passage of an hour seems to be different from so many miles north; but, in reality, the only difference is that time is so many miles in the fourth dimension—not north. To the mathematician no difficulty is presented by a fourth dimension—nor a fifth, and so on, for that matter. When he studies our space as in a fourth dimension he finds it finite because it has positive curvature in that dimension. That, you say, is nonsense. Well, perhaps Minkowski's treatment of time is unfair—perhaps time is something other than a fourth spatial dimension; but with your equipment you can't refute it.

Be this as it may, time is a relative notion—and time, itself, may be finite. Consider yourself as born today and living the rest of time. After a while you would find yourself living again today—you would eventually get back to the date of your birth, and your previous life would be repeated. But, you say, going over and over the same cycle means that time is infinite. That shows the inadequacy of language; that second journey and the third and so on would coincide with the first that again and again would really be just once—all that there is. Yet nowhere would there be a stop—never a beginning nor an end. Time is boundless, though finite.

The implications of the theory are boundless. Slowly, slowly they'll soak in during the centuries to come. People will cling desperately to the old notions; legislators and redeemers will struggle against the further waywardness of mankind. Much traditional philosophy and logic is invalidated by this theory and by other discoveries of recent times. The stream of verbosity that flowed from Aristotle through Hegel will be replaced by something more profound, more mobile, and more concise. And that is a matter for thanks.

Most Compassionate Night

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

The last quick lark and swallow suddenly
 Have flown into the dark, leaving the sky
 Untenanted. Slow, slow, the shadows lie
And only a small wind moves most secretly.
The night's way is gentler with each bright tree
 Than way of love, or any love-bed cry.
 Tenderly the blue dusk tells how day must die,
Warm, breathing day, and day's sweet minstrelsy.

Though most compassionately night has told
 How each shall go with the swallow and the lark
 Sudden and silent to the waiting dark,
What peace shall there assuage this flesh, or hold
 Reward for dust that never can remark
The rose's valor, or the sun's rich gold?

book bazaar

She Who Gets Slapped

A Little Clown Lost. By Barry Benefield. New York: The Century Company. 317 pp. $2.00.

The trick of taking apparently impossible situations and moulding them easily into a flowing narrative is the mark of the excellent story teller. Barry Benefield again does this in his latest novel which has for its central figure a ragamuffin daughter of the road whose medicine man father had not failed to provide her with the heroic "honor and faith and a sure intent." Formal education she had little or none; charm a-plenty; what the Spanish call *don de gente*; and a pride that made her true and straight in all her human relations.

That she should fall in love with an eager, studious boy who wanted to go to the university and become a specialist in the history of the middle ages one accepts from Mr. Benefield quite as naturally as one accepts her final renunciation of him, as she sits on the porch of their first little cottage and hears his son by another woman praise her boyishly and echo the charm that she communicated to all the simple folk before she decided to leave her student husband and go back to the old business of being a circus clown.

I, for one, am grateful that Mr. Benefield can take his story into a great university without the customary organized cheering. One appreciates his picture of a university which exists for something more than a football team. To one who knows a single Louisiana plantation, the little pictures of bayou life bring a pleasant thrill of recognition. To capture some of the grace and charm of the capital city of Texas is a feat that even casual visitors to Austin will appreciate. Most of the mocking birds I've met in books have inspired me only to wonder if the writers ever heard or saw the fine real thing. Mr. Benefield has at last given the mocking bird his due. None of the colored folk in this story sing work-songs, but one yaller gal does wrap the heroine in a soul-satisfying embrace that tightens about you as such sometimes do in real life.

One irritating stylistic trick mars the book for me: that is the use of the narrative present. This continually breaks the illusion—for a story should always be told after it has happened. If it hasn't happened and got itself over with before the telling, then I think it should go into the form of drama.

And the reader should be warned that there are four corking dramatic scenes in the book: Hal and the little Clown after the first Austin performance when she has left her husband for the first time; Hal forcing his wife's baby by another man to drink with him until the baby falls and gashes itself on his bottle; the little Clown's vision of Hal and her husband as they fight and fall from the barn loft in the crash that mangles them both; the two invalids backed off in wheel chairs with pistols waiting for the clock to strike three before they fire away at each other; and finally, that picture of the little Clown's husband and his son, who had come between the husband and wife, teasing at his dad to tell him about his first wife.

J. W. P.

"Well, By Myself!"

HEAVENLY DISCOURSE. By Charles Erskine Scott Wood. New York. Macy-Masius. 325 pp. $2.00.

(The reviewer is granted an interview with God after having read the book in which all scenes take place in Heaven. The characters are Jesus, God, Voltaire, Paine, Mark Twain, monkeys and other peoples. The reviewer is seated on a footstool beside God who is warming his hands before an open fire.)

GOD: "I wish the Devil was back. We haven't had a decent fire since he left."

REVIEWER: But I wanted to ask your opinion of this book of Mr. Wood's. You know you figure quite prominently in it. I'm to review it.

GOD: What's a reviewer?

REVIEWER: Well, a lot of ignorant people get paid for giving opinions about things and books is one of them.

GOD: Where does this happen; in a world of lawyers?

REVIEWER: The earth.

GOD: Where is that?

REVIEWER: Certainly you know. That's where one of your sons was born, as were also your other sons "Guatama, Lao-tze, Confucius and Socrates" for you said so in Mr. Wood's book.

GOD: I'll have nothing to do with this place earth but what's your opinion of the book I'll read the review and if I don't like it I'll have you thrown in the Republican heaven with Mr. Hoover and Mr. Coolidge.

REVIEWER: But I assure you that I will give the book a most favorable and excellent review. It's so authentic concerning the morals, idiosyncracies and mulishness of the United States. Most people think the book is sacrilegious but it's only satirical—about the U. S.

GOD: "Us?"

REVIEWER: No, the United States—U. S.

GOD: "That's it—U. S. They think they are the whole thing so I confused it with 'US'."

REVIEWER: Exactly what the book is about. It's so ironical, acidulous, caustic and true. I just happened to think that it beats John Erskine's *Prohibition and Christianity* forty ways. Wood has done easily what Erskine struggled and failed to do.

GOD: What is or are forty ways?

REVIEWER: It's just an expression of the earth-people.

GOD: Thank goodness nobody there knows me. I'd hate to have to speak to such dumb-bells.

REVIEWER: But a lot think they do.

GOD: Well, I'll have to put a stop to the slander.

REVIEWER: Art Young illustrated the book well.

GOD: Did he draw me?

REVIEWER: Yes, he has a sketch of you at the wheel of the universe.

GOD: Does it do me justice?

REVIEWER: Most people would throw up their hands in holy horror of it but I think it shows you as the benevolent old gentleman you are.

GOD: "By myself", I must purchase a copy for our library.

REVIEWER: Allow me to give you my copy and I'll have the author autograph it. All earth-people like autographs.

GOD: "Well, I'll be—no, of course, I couldn't be." I'll not be contaminated by ways of earth-people but I'll thank you for the book.

REVIEWER: Thanks. Would you write a favorable criticism so we can print it on the jacket over your name? You don't have to read the book. If you wrote the recommendation perhaps the prohibitionists and moralists wouldn't pan Mr. Wood.

GOD: What's a prohibitionist?

REVIEWER: (Voltaire) "He is a Christian and Christians are opposed to Christ."

GOD: (Swedenborg) "How opposed to tolerance prohibition is. How opposed to education and persuasion."

REVIEWER: (Ingersoll) "One capable of reasoning could be no prohibitionist."

GOD: True, brother, true.

REVIEWER: But can you write that word for the book's jacket?

GOD: Not right now. I must go look after my spring onions in the garden for the neighbors' chickens from the tenth terrace have been scratching it up again. Tell St. Peter to call a taxi for you.

REVIEWER: Thanks. The book is a knockout but none of the fundamentalists, moralists or preachers will like it. In fact they won't read more than the first scene.

GOD: Those people like nothing but themselves and pay checks. Good day.

W. W. Anderson.

A Poetess in Prose

THE GOLDEN ROUND. By Frances Winwar. New York: The Century Company. 325 pp. $2.00.

Frances Winwar's latest novel is a romance of thirteenth century Italy in which she relates the story of the rise and fall of a court favorite, Pier, treasurer to the Emperor Frideric. Miss Winwar might be justifiably called a poetess in prose. Her prose has a cadence that would make almost any subject delightful reading. Her prose is often lyric, and at no time is the poetry lost. The author is a master of the art of life and color in writing.

Miss Winwar knows Italy of the thirteenth century with its romance and its lust, its gaudiness and its vice. She portrays with adequate grace and rare story-telling ability the charm and crudeness of the Italians of the early Renaissance.

Against the setting of the brilliant court of the Emperor Frideric a tragedy is unfolded. Pier, the cobbler's son, who rises to be treasurer, loves his Emperor. But Pier is wedded to one of those beautiful women to whom desire for power is the sole ambition. Pier is urged on all sides to be disloyal to his master. In attempting to serve him he is caught in what appears to be the basest treason, and although he claims innocence to the last, he dies. The tale is colored with glimpses of the Emperor's harem; with tender scenes of love; and with views of the life in the court and that of the common people. The members of the court tell, at times, many roguish tales in the vein of Boccaccio.

The author's similes are exquisite, and her descriptions are dazzling with splendor and brilliance. *The Golden Round* is one of the best of the modern historical romances.

John Mebane.

Books Received and Books to be Reviewed

WIDE FIELDS. By Paul Green. Robert M. McBride & Company. $2.50.

THE NEW TEMPLE. By Johan Bojer. The Century Company. $2.50.

BLUE TROUSERS: The Fourth Part of THE TALE OF GENJI. By Lady Murasaki. Translated by Arthur Waley. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

AMERICAN CRITICISM. By Norman Foerster. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

CASPER HAUSER. By Jacob Wassermann. Translated by Caroline Newton. Horace Liveright. $3.00.

LOVE. By William Lyon Phelps. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. $1.00.

CAWDOR AND OTHER POEMS. By Robinson Jeffers. New York: Horace Liveright. 1928. $2.50.

GONGORISM AND THE GOLDEN AGE. By Elisha K. Kane. The University of North Carolina Press. $3.50.

THE ROMANESQUE LYRIC. By Philip Schuyler Allen and Howard Mumford Jones. The University of North Carolina Press. $4.50.

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The Writers

Dane Wilsey, whose interest just now is in the psychical short-story, writes a study this time of one who "had a wife (and a mistress) and couldn't keep her (or, in fact, either of them)" . . . Joseph Mitchell, frequent contributor to this magazine, is a Senior in the University . . . J. J. Slade, Jr., student and instructor in the Engineering Department of the University, toots the horn of philosophic implication for the new geometries in *The Nascent Knowledge, The Magazine's* first real article of the year . . . Lionel Abelson and Howard Trueman Ramsden are first-time contributors to *The Magazine* . . . Margaret Beaufort Miller, student writer of the University of Tennessee, again comes to the aid of this magazine . . . Jon Juanjean, a modest young writer with, however, certain pseudonymic pretentions, presents a poem written in a form he considers his own . . . The book reviews are by J. Willis Posey, instructor in the English Department, W. W. Anderson, former editor of the *Buccaneer,* now with the Seeman Printery of Durham, and John Mebane, literary critic of the *Tar Heel.*

Edited by JOHN MARSHALL — GORDON GRAY, *Business Manager*

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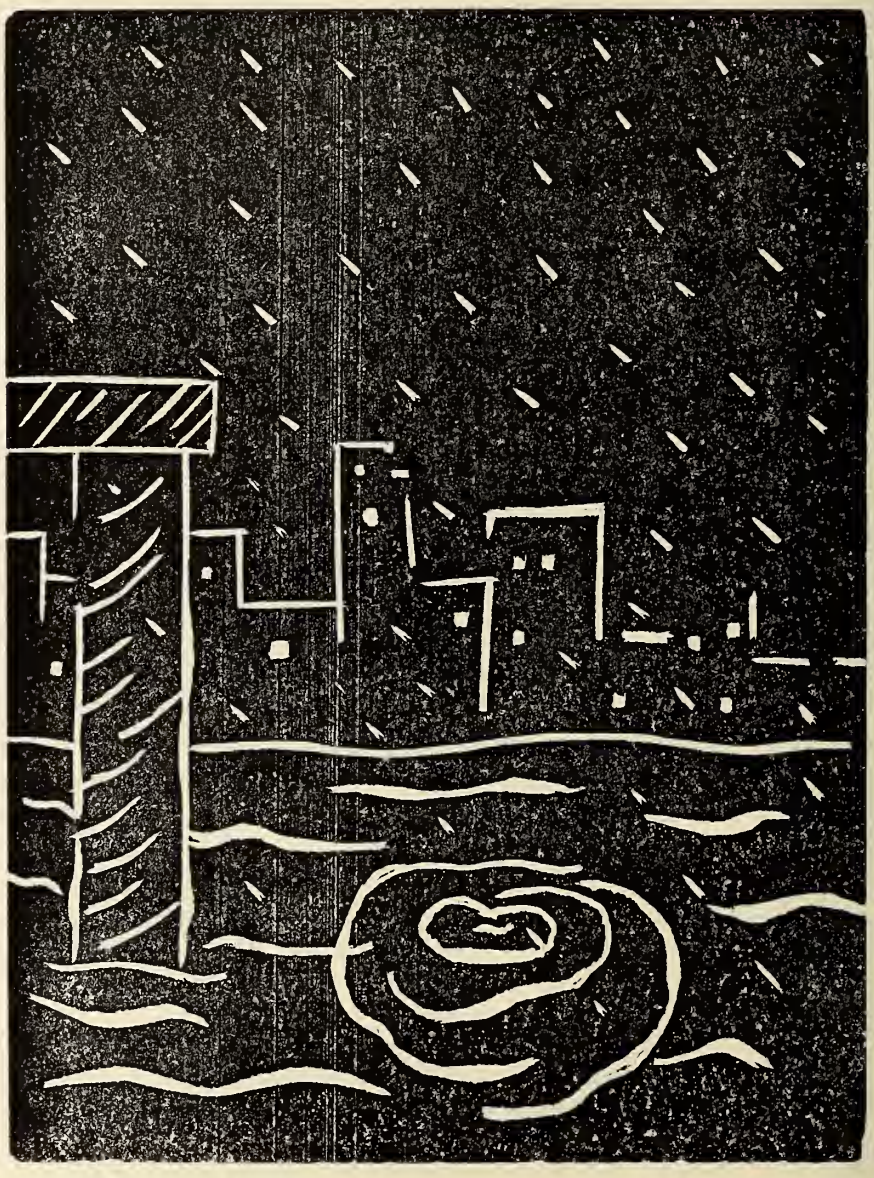
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THE WRITERS

The linoleum-blocks of primitive drawings scattered through this number as decorations were cut especially for *The Magazine* by Sinon Morgan.

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Linoleum-block by W. W. Anderson.

Toward crashes where river ice broke against stone.
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THE
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VOLUME 59 NUMBER 4

Modern Morals

By Charles Wood

In 1492 Columbus gave the world America, and sometime after the World War, America gave the world a new and pernicious type of person, which has fallen in the category known as "flaming youth." Perhaps the phrase "fallen in the category" is unfortunate, because this new and strange element brought its appellation with it. The alarming nonchalance with which it violated all that men had considered moral before its appearance is equalled neither by the Saturnalian orgies of the later Romans, nor by the wine feasts of Alexander the Great. Its place in history is unique.

Many have explained the past decade in terms of post-war exuberance or revolt again parental prudery and suppression. Others, whose perspicacity was not as acute, have ignobly laid the cause to the desire that humans have of living, what they ambiguously term "their own life." Queer enough, this business of "living one's own life" consists in doing things that no one would do if he took the trouble to think his own life through. For instance, one of the essential practices that go to make a success of this own life idea is the acquisition of a premature cynicism concerning life in general and love in particular. Children, who twenty years ago were sullenly dealing with high school Latin and Algebra under oil lamps and the suspicious eyes of parents, now spend their nights far more pleasurably and with far less profit.

Nowadays the normal boy and girl leave high school either world-weary or hard-boiled. Formerly, at this stage of life, the average youngster had his diploma securely clasped in one hand, while with the other he reached for the stars. Only last week a brilliant youth told me that at the tender age of thirteen he had formulated his philosophy of life, and expressed it in the phrase "no entanglements" which, printed upon a placard, hung over his bed.

I have no war to wage with cynicism. It is, I suppose, a natural stage in the maturing of an intelligence. However, I lament its coming to one so young, because inevitable though it be, it is never acquired except through the loss of things that are dear. Most young men grow cynical because of some unfortunate love affair, but they were quite happy for a time. Their cynicism is possible, in fact, because they, at one time, knew some wisp of happiness. The deplorable thing about the present young generation is that they reached this world weariness so much earlier than any previous one has. Experiences have slapped them with such machine-like rapidity that the entire vista of emotion is exploited and robbed of zest when life is still young in years. Love like religion is a necessary delusion. True or false, both do much to palliate the tedium of bare existence. Consequently, the person who finds himself unable to believe in either, is finally more to be pitied than congratulated. The misery of existence consists in discovering the hollowness of truth.

The worst thing that older America has to say about younger America is that it is immoral. This is not the situation at all, as I see it. It is something far worse than immorality that confronts us now. Charging one with immorality presupposes that person to have a moral sense. The precise trouble with the younger generation is that it hasn't a moral sense. "Necking," that ungodly term that denotes modern amorous activities, is not immoral; it is simply part of the evening's entertainment, and considered as nothing more by the participants. In fact, one who looks on it as a preliminary to something to follow is regarded by other young people as hopelessly naïve. This is true in respect to girls from the so-called better families—girls whose position and training do not allow them to be too indiscriminate. Herein lies its utter cheapness. It permits a safe and puny means of sexual satisfaction, an eating the cake and having it too kind of thing. A continuation of this dallying with passion produces a kind of sexual immunity, that makes seduction an art of the past. Thus it is that we have today a race of creatures who linger forever on the border-line of copulation, but never topple quite over. They are on the whole more despicable than those who, either weaker or stronger, are promiscuously

wanton. This latter group is, I suppose, preponderant, judging from the present popularity of summer schools and cheap amusement parks. My own position is neither that of a reformer nor an abettor. Yet, I cannot agree with those who think all this is a healthy reaction against conformity. Neither do I think that the modern sexual jubilee is limited to the intelligentsia. It is just as common in lower society as in upper circles. I am certain, however, that there is an utter cheapness about the whole process, because so many individuals are substituting, in their lives, something for love, that not only isn't love, but is also a definite barricade to the potentialities of ever finding it.

The seriousness of this fraudery becomes manifestly evident when one considers how vital a belief in human love is, not only in differentiating man from beast, but in perpetuating civilization itself. I don't care at all whether or not love is a delusion, imagination, or a Sunday dress for passion. That makes no difference as long as people think they have something genuine. A cursory examination of all institutions that mark the difference between savagery and culture shows the validity of the love idea. It is responsible for the family, and all those things that grow out of the family—schools, government, and what not. What will happen if people lose this sublime delusion? The stupid nonchalance with which people observe this degrading of values is evinced by the prevalent habit of joking at sex on one hand, and ignoring it on the other. Last summer, I went one night to a fashionable club on Long Island. After a few dances I had occasion to go outside to my friend's automobile. His chauffeur informed me that there had been a little excitement going on. "What happened," I asked. "Boy tried to rape a girl out here in a car," he answered evenly. "My God," I exclaimed, "what did they do with him?" "Oh, the cop warned him," he replied. No doubt the maiden petulantly chided the lad herself.

Anyone familiar with that diseased period of history that prefaced the crumbling of the Roman empire, so unfailingly told by Juvenal in his satires, particularly the sixth, cannot fail to see a startling parallel in American life today. At that time Rome had its fingers in the money pots of the world. Wealth had begot idleness and idleness in turn had fostered a brood of vices such as man had never seen before. It was the day of freedom for women. They participated in the gladiatorial games and some developed such robust and healthy bodies that the puny efforts of their husbands could not keep them at home. Many, in holiday spirit, took to the common stews. It was at this period in history that queens initiated the custom of keeping the best men in the army

away from the battle fields. On the whole everybody had a big time, but it didn't last very long. The alarming wealth of America today is prompting the same tendencies in our life. Young people, sophisticated and knowing beyond their years, have exhausted the ordinary store of amusements. Most of them make a last gallant stand by seeking solace in each other's arms. Their elders, tired even of each other's arms, have no where to turn. A physician of the fashionable ultra-wealthy, tells me that dope and perversion are the last resorts for many.

American life resembles late Roman in its bloated wealth and consequent vices. However, it surpasses it in the fact that its moral aberrations are not distinctly the mark of the aristocracy, nor of the middle-aged. The very poor and the very young are in the vanguard of this modern crusade of wantonness. Disillusionment and excess have not now that tinge of exclusive Byronic glory that they had in the remote past. They are as prevalent today as Socialism, poetic genius, and institutions of higher learning. Nor does chastity lurk in the safety of rural recesses; modern good roads and cheap automobiles have almost annihilated the virtuous country maid. In fact, the fresh, full-blown beauty of the rustic girl is exerting a passionate monopoly that it has not known before. The most pitiable trait about the whole business is the weakness and variety of excuses that these benighted individuals, and those who write about them, give for their behavior. Writers of the calibre of Mr. Percy Marks explain it all as the poetic exuberance of youth. Most of the victims attempt no explanation. They simply take it as they do their meals. One delightfully naïve young lady justified her conduct by this simple formula. "If a boy is decent-looking, I generally have no aversion to kissing him; in fact I rather like to. I usually succeed in getting what I want too," she added, not without a faint pride. Others, more conservative, are prone to hold out for an avowal of love before yielding. Not that they believe the declaration sincere; it is merely the faint assertion of instinctive modesty. That procedure is taken to be rather quaint nowadays, however. Most of them rush headlong into battle stripped for action; sometimes this may be taken literally.

The most deplorable result of this campaign of "flaming youth" is the murder of romance. That beautiful, rather pastoral love, with its long desire and sweet maturing, which was the privilege of our ancestors, and the pride of our poets, has disappeared now; it is supplanted by the rapid, cinema-like passion that has the efficiency and coldness of steel. Formerly love was considered as the divine fire, that bit of celes-

tial ambrosia given to men by the gods. The average high school child, today, knows that it is nothing more than a chemical reaction. The famous loves of the past were something more than mere profligacy. People then had the happy faculty of deluding themselves; they made passion more than a hot conjunction of flesh. And that is precisely all it is today. In fact, the commonest salutation that one hears on a dance floor today is "Get Hot!" Girls greet boys with it, and the boy, rushing madly to the next break, prefaces his ridiculous dance twaddle with "Get hot, Honey."

The easy susceptibility with which these haggard youngsters succeed in "getting hot" is responsible for the prevalent custom of running girls' schools as if they were prisons. Each girl is regarded by the authorities as a potential prostitute, and they consider it their high duty to innoculate them with the germ of chastity. I know a fashionable school in Virginia that requires all its girls to sign a pledge which stipulates that they shall kiss no boys, even when they are home for the holidays. The common result of all this caution is generally a wild rampage when school lets out. The clever maiden is averse to acquiring this synthetic purity. It gets her nowhere with her companions. "Her only virtue was, alas, her virtue" seems to be the common reaction to these lady-like ladies.

I mentioned in the outset a few causes to which some have attributed the present peculiar condition of morals (by peculiar I mean a state of immorality that is such without being at all vicious, a laxity that has ignorance and discontent rather than criminal instinct for a basis), but no one has yet, I believe, explained the true cause. Not that one needs an unusual perspicacity to discover it, but that no one has been interested enough to probe into the question.

The explanation seems to me to be twofold. Following the hint that I gave concerning the easy accessibility of wealth today, a partial solution unfolds itself readily enough. The comparative ease in which most Americans live nowadays is a new and significant phase in the history of nations. Hitherto luxury and ease were the possessions of a limited few. The majority of people existed by the lauded sweat of the brow, and so copiously did they sweat that little time was left for other things, little time and less energy. Those few who, through fortune or craft, were able to tax the efforts of other people were the ones who kept the traditions of immorality alive. In America before nineteen hundred this was particularly true. That narrow fringe of humanity along our eastern coast had little time, while answering the

wild challenge of the West, for casual flirting with pleasure. Nor did the adventuresome activity of their lives leave much space for the discontent of satiety or the inclination to philander. There were vast things to be done and few to do them. Life was full of work, and many counted themselves fortunate if this work procured them a bare existence. In a society such as this where men and women were always eagerly peering over the next western mountain range, where work was long and hard and profits meagre, where God wore a long beard and sneaked up on offenders, casual living and loving was impossible.

The swift and glittering strength of Modern America has changed all this. The rapid and common exploitation of natural resources has given wealth to millions of people whose immediate ancestors chased actual wolves from their doors. This wealth has brought with it not only automobiles and electric bed-warmers, but inactivity, premature satiation of ordinary existence, and a vast boredom that has no intellectual resources with which to console itself. Consequently, it has taken the only other outlet, which is a physical one.

That simple life, in which sons took up the trades of their fathers and married the daughters of their next-door neighbors at the precise age that they now leave home for college, is now a matter of history. People cannot marry today at the tender ages that our grandfathers did. The young man or woman who is just beginning to realize the puzzling insistence of passion knows that to marry with no equipment for living is to slap fortune in the face. They are put to it to make a choice between immediate pleasure and the chance of future happiness. Many avoid both issues by the easy way of illegitimate and irresponsible loves. That too, partially, explains modern morality. The irony and tragedy of all this lies in the fact that hardly any of the much cursed younger generation are actually debased, but are lost in a vague groping for happiness.



Revised Spiritual Lullaby

I

Sheriff sen wurd—hear what he say—
"Nigger don you poke dat fire—
Fust ob de week's elecshun day—
Nigger don you poke dat fire."
Votes dat he wants 'll fail to be—
White folks is mad wid you and me.
Snake curl up—ebrebody see—
Nigger don you poke dat fire.

II

Sheriff send wurd, hear what he say—
"Nigger git wood for de fire.
Raise up de price—boss wants his pay
Nigger git wood for de fire."
De law abides—dat's what we got;
Water de mash and let it rot,
Sins ob de day will be forgot—
Nigger git wood for de fire.

—*M. F.*



Sonnets Of A Cub Reporter

By R. K. Fowler

LOBSTER SHIFT

One o'clock, and still three hours more
In which by nervous friction I may wear
A faience finish on this goddam chair—
Three hours left to gape at the littered floor
And admire the festoons on the cuspidor.
Each minute now is stripped down to the bare
Rib-bones of thin cafard—even the air
Is thicker and less porous than before.

Nothing to do but sit and yawn and wait.
Police reporter may hand out the dope
On a nigger that got knifed, or some such thing;
Most of the time he doesn't call this late,
But as long as niggers live there's always hope.
Would prayers suffice to make a 'phone bell ring?

"GO"

Go. That means I ride a raucous trolley
Into suburban wilds and seek the spot
Where the Sons of Murad burble in their grot
And chafe the night with Neo-Turkish folly.
Or perhaps the Christ Church girls have gathered holly
And decked the vestry room—a pious lot
Of frumps who at the hour of death will trot
Giggling to heaven. An evening gay and jolly.

People are asses (much as it may please us
To pose as humans) mobbing in lodge and club
For konklaves, speeches and kindred doltish capers—
But why, in the sacred name of gentle Jesus,
Should they summon forth a poor, hard-working cub
To unfold their asininity in the papers?

CITY EDITOR

The king glowers and briskly waves his pipe
Like a reeking scepter. In no uncertain terms
He scatters from his lips the pent-up germs
Of disapproval. "Cut out all the tripe
And stick to facts." His puffy fingers wipe
Sweat from his cheeks with a gesture that affirms
Lurid disgust for inefficient worms,
Romanticists and creatures of that stripe.

Strangers see him sitting at the table,
Pencil poised—face porcine and red,
And find no cause to bend obsequious knees.
But his shirt-sleeves are the ghosts of royal sable
And with monarchial zeal he cleaves the head
From any phrase that balks his iron decrees.

OBIT.

"William Ernest Banks, aged sixty-nine,
Died suddenly last night." Another one
Tucked drastically away, all prancing done—
And now I chant his requiem in a line
On the fifth page, mentioning how fine
A soul he had. "Survived only by son,
William, Junior."—who probably has begun
To scan insurance records. Mine all mine.

William Ernest Banks—once a man,
Maybe a civic power, one who stood
High in the Masons—kind and loving father.
Now a couple of sticks in the printer's pan,
A few stiff words punched on the Underwood,
A lousy rewrite job—and a hell of a bother.

Acceptance

By Lionel Abelson

O for the stern exuberance of steel
To prop my bones, to cast its mesh
Over the acid staleness of my flesh,—
Steel that supports the wheel in hot embrace
And yet keeps virginal its identity.

Above this pen that preys upon the page
A solar system extinguishes itself:
I teach my veins to be adulterous,
I tear the rhyming couplets of my cells,
I rape the secret pattern of my flesh,
The mystery compounded into me.
A thousand bleeding particles of time
Cry testimony against the day we met.

My corridors are clamant for your steps
To hallow all the aches your feet impress.
I bow to dissolution tinned with din,
Let chaos conquer armed with your caress.



The Picture

By Warren Taylor

She could not understand the picture. The fingers of the lady's hand were undelicately closed and beneath them there were brown shrubs. She was holding a spray of brown leaves in her other hand, in her short heavy hand, and beyond it there were tortured brown clouds. As she held the spray her dress curved with her arm from the shoulder to the wrist and then fell to the floor almost on the first marble step that led into her garden where there were two close trees. How near may trees be, she thought. Perhaps they may be as near each other as the buttons on the lady's dress. How crudely they were curved. The artist had to curve them crudely to balance his portrait of the lady. He had given more color to those near the ruff. The weight of the ruff did not break her face from the picture, it emphasized her repose. The hand that held the brown spray was formal. Her hair was almost formal; there was one curl that had fallen from its place by her ear. If the lady had not smiled! Well, perhaps she had not. The artist had printed the smile in, for there has never been one whose smile could be so subtile. The brown everywhere pronounced it. She did not understand. She could not understand the picture.

But she feared to take it from the wall. There is a lady high in fashion, stately. How can she smile when her formalism is so natural? She will walk down the marble steps into her garden. Perhaps she will stand silently for a moment near her precise trees. She will not turn her head to see those brown clouds. As they move she will not think of an adagio; but when she again walks into her parlor her gentleman may feel that she is not now as she was when she was standing beside her precise trees. She will smile subtilely. Well, the picture must remain there. The artist did not paint the lady when she was standing in her garden.

The bell of the telephone will not ring. She had not expected it to ring, but often she had thought of its ringing. He had been away for many days and she knew he would not come back. There are reasons for other events. He used to sit there on the divan and look at her as she said so high in fashion stately, "I am happier than you would be-

lieve." He used to light a cigarette and look at the spray of brown leaves which had no meaning for him, but he understood the picture. Perhaps he did like it; but if it should be taken down one of his thirty years would still remain in the room with one of hers. If he returned he might care for it no longer. One may change. She had not.

The maid thought that she had, but the maid had grown romantic for she knew the automobile there was his and she imagined a theatre was not exactly as a house where screens catch shadows of those who are maids and of those who are queens, of maids who know their ladies and of queens who smile. She had heard the measured voices of her lady and of her lady's gentleman. She knew all royal ladies did not smile, but she had not thought of it. She had said, though not calmly, "She is now happier than anyone would believe. He will take her hand when she smiles"; but she had not been in the parlor when he came, and she had never seen him take her hand.

Often he came for her. How primly they sat in a box and how delicately she clapped her hands after the curtain had fallen. She remembered that she had not always felt that she was the same when he was very near her, but one need not believe a smile could express the difference. The lady in the picture smiled, but she held the spray closely in her hand. The lady did not have a fan to move as gracefully as she had moved hers when they were sitting in a box. Once they had gone to the theatre often, now they went no more.

He had gone away. The maid did not hear the automobile in the street, and she did not believe her lady happier than she was as she had believed when she had pushed a fallen curl into the geometric pattern of her hair and walked into the parlor where he was waiting. She modelled her hair as precisely as she had ever modelled it, but the ears of the maid did not have the purr of an automobile to help her see a smile on the face she saw in the mirror. The face had not changed. If the maid had had no imagination she would have never believed that it had changed. She did not feel it was like the face of the lady in the picture, but dignity almost destroyed differences for her. She could not break through such stateliness. The painted lady could not say, "Shall I wear these slippers to-night?" The smile which she could locate only in the eyes for they seemed always to look down at her so intimately made her feel that there was more than canvas and paint, or that canvas and paint might be more than cheeks and evening gowns. How infrequently these gowns are worn now. The lady is quiet when she reads and she

does not touch the keys as others touch them when she plays the piano. There is something stiff about her playing.

Well, the lady could look at the picture no longer. She could not understand it. She sat down and gazed at the portrait of her father which was hanging on another wall. Once he had lived in this house. For many years after his wife had been vaulted in her purple he had lived in this house, but he had gone and she was alone. Perhaps her father would have understood. He was the only one who could have understood. Her gentleman did not understand as he and she sat in the box. If he had understood he would not have gone away, or had he gone away because he did understand? After her book had fallen to the floor gently she thought of these things.

When had he said, "But that does not seem to be true. Bodies have form and anomalies are severe violations. I wonder if there is stone alone. Surely chisels and mallets are very inanimate. There must be something that breathes?" How had he said "Good-night" or had he said "Good-night" at all? He was walking through the door. Things were very clear. He went out into the street and he had not come through the door again.

Is there now but one soul in this room, she wondered. There is a picture of the father in this house. The soul of the other man is being carried by the body that is sitting, standing where? If the body were here would it again walk through the door and carry the soul with it? There are only a portrait and a memory. The portrait was carried out of the door and sealed in the vault. The memory is standing in another room. It is talking to another lady.

Is there even one soul in this room? Can a soul look at the yet unwithered flowers that have been laid at the door of a vault? Can a soul walk high in fashion stately down the marble steps into the garden and stand silently near two precise trees? Will it smile subtilely when a gentleman walks into the parlor? Can it wander through the streets and look through the windows of houses? Can a soul walk down the street and look into the faces of other souls and slowly cry, "You will come into this house with me and there will be no going out of it. The door has been bolted and the key has been buried deep in the roots of two trees that are now growing in the garden. There is neither a mallet to break the lock nor a chisel to cut it. Come into this house. You cannot be carried out of a room in which there are flowers. There are flowers in this house and there will always be for we can never go out of it again"?

The book was on the floor. She did not pick it up. It was there by

the chair she was sitting in, undisturbed. Were the letters striving on the pages she did not see as something she did not know was striving within her? The walls of the room had not fallen together. The pictures were as quiet as a tomb where neither numbers nor words defined a time that has been forgotten nor an intention that is loam. She had heard madmen flung themselves from the chairs they were sitting in, gripped their hair with their hands, wound their feet together, and broke their faces with smiles. She did not move. Somewhere within her body the waves broke on rigid cartilages that they might not lose the beat of the dull chapel bell. The wind blew by the mourning women and men as the sea ate into the corpse upon the sand. The wind whipped the rain against the windows of the house and they were broken and the roof melted and the rain beat in upon her heart. When there is darkness those who have words may speak and the rain will fall no longer and the roof will be restored, but when there are no words and darkness the bells are cast from the towers and broken upon the stones, the walls are thrown into the earth and the river lost in the cavern, the cross blown down and the flesh that has been nailed into the wood torn. Somewhere within her body the brown spray had been torn from the formal hand. She did not move. Now there were no lips to speak and there were no ears to hear. The pages of the book could not speak. The arms of the chair could not lift themselves. Bitterly no one could protest.

She walked to the piano and sat down and played. The tones fell mechanically and slow. Was it, strangely, the nocturne that she had played when he stood in this house and talked the last time? He had said, "The pattern is very exact, but is it either program or absolute? There might be no distinction if there were no life." What he had said seemed to her to be true but she had not known the meaning of all that he had said. She touched the keys heavily but the strings gave out hollow and unexpressive sounds which fell into a melody that did not seem as it had seemed when she had played it before he walked out of the house to which he had not returned. She could not continue. She would stand erect and walk out of this room. She would not look at the spray of brown leaves for she would remember that the lady who was holding it was smiling. Now the lady could have the room alone. She would not look at her as she walked out of this room, nor would she walk down the steps out of her house into a street where there were close trees. She had closed the door of her house high in fashion stately and she would not now open it that her loneliness might wander down the street and look into the windows of other houses.

Three Poems

By Margaret Beaufort Miller

MAGISTER ARTIUM

Books all day
At night the stars
How doth mortality affront
The majesty of Ars!

MANDRAGORA

O take no fair
To lie at rest
Upon thy breast
From weariness:

A thorny dart
Shall pierce thy heart
And fester there
In bitterness.

HILL DREAMER

A thousand days upon these hills
Her fecund courses run
You saw the fair and febrile earth
Rejoice to meet the sun.

A thousand nights before I saw
The lusty planet Mars
Stride down the marches of the sky
To seek the little stars.



Perhaps I Shouldn't Have Mentioned It

By Charles Wood

I am not proud that I am a man. I am not proud that logically and excellently, in measured sentences whose writing no excellence can justify, I can tell you why I am not proud that I am a man. I exercised no choice in the matter. I might have been born a woman just as easily as I was born what I am. I might have been less than either—a moron, an idiot, or even, perhaps, a brute. I, as all my brothers are, am a biological accident, unsought and unseeking. I was the antithesis of myself. Once I was not ever a germ. I sang no songs, loved no women, knew neither hunger nor happiness. Now I am myself. What a horrible thing it is to be one's self! Alone, isolated in a small bundle of flesh, all that happens to me affects just me, not my family, my friend, nor any other than I. No one can participate in my pleasure or pain. I am myself. And you others, you outsiders, you whom the currents of life swing by me, you who imagine that when you touch my body you have pierced me,—you have not, not at all, for you are yourselves, and you too, are walled in as I am walled in. No kiss can make a woman's lips mine, no flame can melt my body into hers, no, not for a transient second. We are always ourselves. Nothing that I have done, no poem that I have written, and I have written good poems, no mistake that I have made, and I have made them, can bring glory or shame to me, for they are not myself. They are poems and mistakes. I am not proud that some human cog digging another's ditch has raised his muddy hat to me, anymore than I am ashamed that once a millionaire gave me a suit of clothes. I acknowledged the lifted hat, and I wore the suit. I am not even proud that I am not proud.



On Contemplating Prohibition and the Methodist Bishops

By D. Peirson Ricks

I

Cry aloud to the gods that we first met in Homer,
The gods that could smile, and the gods that could weep!
Ah, then lived mankind in perpetual summer,
For Zeus had compassion—himself oft drank deep
Of the cup he had filled; often tasted the dinner
That he had prepared for his subjects to *eat*—
Not pass in disdain; and he did not call sinner
Whoever enjoyed his celestial meat.

II

But that season has passed into cold, sullen winter,
The gods have deserted us, frozen is the font;
Now the earth is ruled o'er by a god called the Stinter
Whose custom forever it is to cry "don't"
To the joys he created, the pleasures he gave us
To satisfy palates *he* fashioned in whole—
O gods of Olympus, come down now and save us!
Remove our desire, or restore us our soul.



Winesburg Without Women— or, The Brown Hat

By Dane Wilsey

(With apologies to Sherwood Hemingway)

Jake was sitting down. He was sitting in a chair. He was sitting there looking at his hands. He looked like he had been looking at them for a long time. He had been. He liked his hands. They made him remember things. He remembered that they were strong hands and that they tasted like dried leaves, that they tasted like something he wanted. He remembered that his father had had hands. His hands had been strong and they had tasted like dried leaves. Jake remembered that. He liked to remember it. It make him feel good. It made him wonder about things and feel sophisticated.

He was holding something in his hands. It was a brown hat. He looked at it. He caressed it with his hands and thought about it. He had wanted a brown hat. It seemed like he had always wanted it. It made him feel good. He remembered that his father had had a hat. It had been a brown hat. He remembered his father and his brown hat. That made him think about Bret. Bret had loved him. She had tasted like dried leaves. He remembered Bret. He wondered why he had left her. Perhaps it was because of his brown hat. Bret had never had one. He wondered about it.

He was holding his brown hat in his hands, in his strong hands. He wondered if it was a hat. He wondered if it was brown. He could smell the brownness. It smelled like Bret. It smelled like his father's hat. He wondered why he could never possess it, why he could never possess its brownness. It made him afraid that he would remember too much.

The door opened. It opened on its hinges. Bill came in. He came in slowly. He was sucking on his finger nails. He was sucking in the memories that lay there. He looked at Jake. He looked at Jake's hands, at the strong hands holding the brown hat.

"That looks like a brown hat," he said.

Avec Paroles

By JOHN MEBANE

Words shimmer across brains
like particles of snow
promenading the panes
of windows below.
 Words hang from lips,
 dangle from tongues
 in too-red mouths
 a syllable drips
 liquidly
 from between parted teeth
 falling beneath
 heavily-accented tones.
Words half-uttered,
mangled groans,
poise on quaking lips,
totter and heavily thud
against teeth crushing
into atoms a flood
of delicate platitudes
uttered in pleasant attitudes.

 Words fill the room,
 seek out dusty nooks,
 penetrate the gloom
 in agonized looks,
 batter the silence,
 over-ride the quiet air,
 fill forbidden places
 with excruciating care.
See those faces!
Listening to words,
hundreds of words,
carefully chosen and served
from corners of curved
bow-shaped lips.
 Where do these words go
 streaming like rain
 in an everlasting flow
 from intricate brains?

Surcease

By W. Wadsley Anderson

The snowflakes came down like a blanket of smoke
While winter winds screamed with their burdens of white
And sealed all the cracks of the windows and doors
With flakes from the storm that rushed on through the night.
The alley was filled with this mattress of down,
The only clean thing that the street ever knew,
While a figure in rags shrank against a bleak door
And rubbed its cold hands which were blackened and blue.
The sunken chest heaved as the wind blew a blast
Driving arrows of ice through the flesh to his soul
And a light, at the end of the alley, that shone
Through a grease-covered window, where rags patched a hole,
Went dim; but the figure still clung to the door
And the tottering light struggled up to a flame.
The night wind bore down with a fury increased
While the wrinkled head bowed as a sinner in shame.
His numbed fingers tugged at a tattered felt hat
And, as the gale pushed the man on with a moan,
The blur of black rags seemed to float through the drifts
Toward crashes where river ice broke against stone.
The snow hurried on with the wind as its mate
Covering a footprint and hat with a shout;
A light that shone dim through a grease-covered pane
At the end of the alley flared up—and went out.

To Certain Immortal Women

By Leslie Gordon O'Pry

(Rizpah, who lived about 1,020 B.C., was a concubine in the court of Ishboseth, son of Saul, whose Northern Kingdom was in opposition to that of David in the South. Jealousy over her charms caused Ishboseth's betrayal by his Commander-in-Chief and the subsequent murder of both men.)

I will not believe you dead,
 Lying, a mummy, cold and ashy gray
In some sealed tomb, beneath the lead
 Of age-packed sand. The day
Long passed, when captains sold their kings the while
 They threw rich empires at your nod
And showered the worth of nations on your smile.
 You, blasted by an indignant God
Still live, Rizpah. Your cow-eyed glance,
 The painted lips which frame
Your small caresses. Still your fevered dance
 Fashions a toast, in low hearts, of your name.
You dead? No—men yet slit their fellow's throat
Over your smile, and clutching you, still gloat.



book bazaar

The Ineluctable Modalities of Art

WHITE BUILDINGS: POEMS BY HART CRANE. With a foreword by Allen Tate. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926. $2.00.

Professor Saintsbury has said of modern literature that it is characterized by a "vagabond curiosity of matter and a tormented unrest of style." In poetry this unrest has called into being a multiplicity of methods; all directed towards the discovery of a modality complete in itself, separable from living relationships, justifying its existence by its existence. But poetry itself is discovery and not method, and discovery will always elude the critic's analysis. Methods may be dissected, but discoveries carry a virgin and immaculate armour. This is the double difficulty that confronts the reader of such a poet as Hart Crane. His poems are at once individual modalties and violent discoveries. Perhaps it is unfortunate that the "tormented unrest and vagabond curiosity" have not given birth to a more penetrable modality possessing the quality of discovery that makes the poetry of Hart Crane significant. On the other hand obscurity is not too great a price to pay for poetry.

The reader of *White Buildings* is confronted with a group of poems that do not appeal to any discoverable human emotion but have a passionate emotional life of their own; a poetic organ in which the fantastic has become so intense that it produces the illusion of reality without partaking of the real.

In the sequence of poems called *Voyages,* Mr. Crane has written what are regarded as love poems. But they have no relation to the familiar psychological emotion. Love poems perhaps, and yet what is one to say of—

> Infinite consanguinity it bears—
> This tendered theme of you that light
> Retrieves from sea plains where the sky
> Resigns a breast that every wave enthrones;
> While ribboned water lanes I wind
> Are laved and scattered with no stroke
> Wide from your side, whereto this hour
> The sea lifts, also, reliquary hands.

And so, admitted through black swollen gates
That must arrest all distance otherwise,—
Past whirling pillars and lithe pediments,
Light wrestling there incessantly with light,
Star kissing star through wave on wave unto
Your body rocking!
and where death, if shed,
Presumes no carnage, but this single change,—
Upon the steep floor flung from dawn to dawn
The silken skilled transmemberment of song;
Permit me voyage, love, into your hands. . . .

The poet has not expressed an experienced emotion with which similar emotions that we have experienced respond. The emotion expressed is of another genre. When Burns wrote

Had we never met and parted
We would never have been broken hearted.

he made a common possession exquisite, but somehow the commonplace adheres to the exquisite and we of the twentieth century demand a sterner and more ascetic beauty of poetry. We ask that the poet deal directly with the exquisite, so vivifying it that it approaches the level of familiarity which the commonplace has hitherto monopolized.

The fact is that life has become so bereft of illusions that love, religion, and all the old themes can no longer be made magical in verse. As no other themes for poetry exist, the poet is compelled to create not only the poem but the theme as well. The two must be inseparable, the theme must inhere in the poem and has no previous existence if the poet's inspiration is to be pure magic.

In the *Voyages* sequence Mr. Crane writes:

And yet this great wink of eternity
Of rimless floods unfettered leewardings
Samite sheeted and processioned where
Her undinal vast belly moonward blends
Laughing the rapt inflections of our love.

Here is an ocean awesome in its immediacy, terrifying in its real and inviolate unreality, an ocean that has no existence outside the poem, a metaphysical ocean synthesizing perfectly with a perfect and imaginative world.

"Mr. Crane is preserving himself from a theme," writes Laura Riding. This is a misconception. No poet, as Allen Tate has pointed out, can write intelligibly without "a perfectly articulated theme." The difficulty is produced by the fact

that today (in contrast with former periods in which an ambitious theme nourished the poem) an ambitious theme feeds on the poem and saps its vitality. Hart Crane escapes the dilemma by creating themes which inhere in his poems. Thus poem and theme are alike ambitious, each strengthens and supports the other. If one were to write a mystical, rhetorical poem on love he would lapse into absurdities. But Mr. Crane's theme is not love. It is a mystical and rhetorical love entirely en rapport with a mystical and rhetorical poem.

"Give us coals and we will create fire" has been the cry of the modern poet. But there are only dry stink and ashes. Hart Crane has imagined coals, and the fire is a gorgeous vision even if the coals do not exist.

Lionel Abelson.

"The Child of Europe"

Casper Hauser. By Jacob Wassermann. Horace Liveright. $3.

In the fall of 1828 a ragged young man of about seventeen, able to speak only a few words and walking like a child, appeared in Nuremberg. He did not remember anything except a small dim room and a man who brought him bread and water. The village took him in charge and for awhile he was a curiosity. Influential men, scholars and doctors, became interested in the youth and proved that he was the Crown Prince of Baden and that he had been forced into seclusion when he was a child by relatives of the ruler's morganatic wife who wished to secure the succession. The boy was named Casper Hauser and until his inexplicable death in 1833 he was called The Child of Europe.

Learned men came from all over the continent to ask him questions. When they were through bothering the boy they said: "We are dealing with a person who has no conception of his fellow men, does not speak like others, does not know anything of yesterday or tomorrow, does not grasp time, does not know he is alive."

There have been many books published about the mystery of Hauser. But they were documents, histories in small type. Wassermann goes further, much further. He makes the boy a symbol. Hauser is a human, innocent and pure, an Adam before temptation. His sensitiveness would allow him to become a superman. But the doctors and teachers and friends ruin him.

Wassermann makes a splendid novel of the story. He is almost too compassionate. He wishes to find bread and roses for the insulted and injured. He is angry and he calls his antipathy "Slothfulness of Heart."

Wassermann asks questions which shatter the stilts under many things. It is like listening to a state's attorney. You wonder who the hell has given the man authority to ask such questions.

Wassermann has the integrity and strength of Dostoyevsky, but no one will say so. This book is a good book, but there are so many good books. Advanced literary critics, elegant hermaphrodites, may find fault with so much loud talk over man's inhumanity to man, but they should be pleased with the way the book is written.

Wassermann has none of the heaviness of other German novelists of his generation. His style is neither indomitable or bloodshot.

B. MacKellar.

"Turbia La Bebía Yo"

GONGORISM AND THE GOLDEN AGE. By Elisha K. Kane. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. $4.50.

Those who see the way to artistic perfection in the works of Gertrude Stein, E. E. Cummings (in his most startling moods), Picasso, Brancusi and the rest of the intellectual renegades must read this book if only to find out that that sort of thing has been tried before.

In this excellent book Dr. Kane surveys the anomalous in art, particularly that of the Golden Age of Spain, and finds it the manifestation of a more or less virulent case of a disease which most artists contract at one time or another and from which most of them recover except in times of an epidemic.

Now and then, as one reads through its pages, one has the feeling that Dr. Kane is a trifle dogmatic—where he tends, for instance, to belittle the influence of past and contemporaneous artists on some outburst of gongorism, or hesitates to admit the æsthetic in the bizarre—but there comes to one's mind the recollection of that heavy thesis from which the present work was so happily salvaged and one is willing to believe that all the "proofs" (as far as they are conceivable) lie safely hidden therein.

However, even in his most enthusiastic moods, Dr. Kane seldom lets his prejudice triumph over logic, and it is this (I suppose) that "pedagogues are pleased to term scholarship." And in spite of this scholarly restraint the book is good reading even for those who see no scandal in popularizing.

The appended English version of the poetry is no more than the free rendering of a few difficult and obscure verses. At its best the poetry is almost untranslatable; here little more can be done than to translate the meaning of a few fairly meaningless passages, and Dr. Kane has done this. The author has chosen carefully his poetical illustrations so that their appearance throughout the text does not impede the progress of the reader who knows no Spanish and is obliged to turn to the appendix for the meaning of the lines.

Examples of gongorism in arts other than literature are found in the twenty-two plates that make up the end of the book.

The text is attractively decorated with pen sketches by the author.

J. J. Slade, Jr.

"*An Uncompromising Realism*"

The New Temple. Johan Bojer. Translated from the Norwegian by C. Archer. The Century Co. 341 pp. $2.50.

With ten books to his credit it would appear that Johan Bojer would have acquired a better method of presenting a story, enough experience that he might choose a less hackneyed subject, and sufficient knowledge of the art of writing that would prohibit his use of so many platitudes. But, perhaps, the translator should be given credit for the latter.

Passing opinion on translated books is a precarious undertaking for one who knows neither the original language nor the country of that language. Perhaps it is that lack of knowledge that makes *The New Temple* appear drab and monotonous. Certainly the publishers should have taken out the few typographical errors and re-run the signatures that were off register. The latter in itself is enough to distort the book.

Mr. Bojer (or whatever his title would be in Norwegian) has seen fit to further the cause of Christianity by making a boy of about 20—who has led a carefree life peppered with communistic ideas—study for the priesthood because his father, whom he has not seen in eighteen years, wishes it. The boy has always been of a rebellious nature and the sudden turn strikes a cacophonous note. His sister, who the author insinuates dominates her brother, stays in the background and superintends a colossal estate left her by an aunt who has reared both children.

The sister eventually marries and for the omission of a love affair we are gratified. The young hero discards his rebellious ideas, goes into theology and "comes home."

Perhaps Mr. Bojer has shown us his great simplicity of style as the dust-jacket blurb states—the style is simple at any rate. *The New Temple* may be an accurate and infinite picturization of farm life in Norway, but there appears nothing particularly brilliant in its presentation. There is little plot and less action—if there was meant to be any. One thing is indisputable, *The New Temple* is an old temple, merely another reason why professional reviewers, we hear, seek jobs as window-washers. The Philadelphia *Record* says Bojer writes in a strain of "exalted and infinite sympathy"—but he writes only in a strain.

W. W. Anderson.

Books Received and Books to be Reviewed

Mamba's Daughters. By Du Bose Heyward. Doubleday, Doran & Company. $2.50.

Wide Fields. By Paul Green. Robert M. McBride & Company. $2.50.

Blue Trousers: The Fourth Part of The Tale of Genji. By Lady Murasaki. Translated by Arthur Waley. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

American Criticism. By Norman Foerster. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

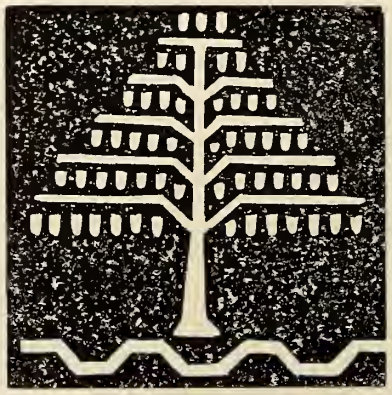
Cawdor and Other Poems. By Robinson Jeffers. New York: Horace Liveright. $2.50.

The Romanesque Lyric. By Philip Schuyler Allen and Howard Mumford Jones. The University of North Carolina Press. $4.50.

Midsummer Night and Other Poems. By John Masefield. Macmillan Company. $2.50.

The Writers

R. K. Fowler, author of the much-maligned short story *Slaves,* was summarily expelled from this University by the fanatical and unintelligent Student Council of two years ago, but was later reinstated by a faculty appellate committee which met to consider the case upon the suggestion of the *Faun,* an independent and short-lived paper of campus criticism. At present he holds the position the subjects of his sonnets suggest on the *Virginian-Pilot* of Norfolk . . . Warren Taylor, instructor of English at the University of Tennessee, studied at Vanderbilt, and while there was associated with the Fugitive group of poets . . . Charles Wood, senior, contributes poetry and prose to *The Magazine* solely. He is a member of Sigma Upsilon, national literary fraternity . . . Lionel Abelson is from New York and is a junior in this University. . . W. W. Anderson, editor last year of the *Buccaneer,* contributes this time an illustrative linoleum-block to his poem "Surcease" . . . Sinon Morgan, an alumna of the University, contributed to this magazine and served on the editorial and art staffs of the college comic . . . John Mebane, columnist of the *Tar Heel* and managing editor of *The Buccaneer,* has become a frequent contributor to *The Magazine* . . . Margaret Beaufort Miller is a student at the University of Tennessee.



Edited by JOHN MARSHALL — GORDON GRAY, *Business Manager*

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Henceforth

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

This the Beauty—this the Truth; this the wine—
And this the lees, strained words of febrile lore,
Would wrench life's fecund circle to a line
More chastened than the son pale Mary bore.

A gibbous strip of silver on the place
Where once the moon was gold speaks death
as true—
All else is shadow-profile of a face
Seen distantly and of unstable hue.

Let pedants if they wish dig mastodon
But I like flesh laid softly firm on bone.
Henceforth I shall be ruthless myrmidon
Of all I love—and I shall not atone.

Most sacred Hebe, holy Pan, be bold
Henceforth as sweetly mounting wine in me,
And it will matter not that I should hold
A rose-smooth nymph who turns a briary tree.

THE
CAROLINA
MAGAZINE

VOLUME 59 NUMBER 5

The Professor Of Mathematics

By J. J. Slade, Jr.

No, you can't say that I did it in a jealous fit for I am not a jealous man, as I can amply demonstrate. I don't know why I did it. Let me tell you what happened, as nearly as I can remember, and from that you may draw your own conclusions. Let me see; I had better start with my first acquaintance with Clarence Elridge since it was he of whom they say that I was jealous. I can't understand where they got all they're saying about the affair.

I think Clarence worked for Grey and Company; I don't know what he does now, he quit that place soon after I met him. These chaps who sell books presume a great deal, and they're often quite exasperating, but Clarence had a winning personality and one day I asked him home for lunch. I can't remember now why I asked him; perhaps only because he was so friendly. He and Alice became good friends from the very first; while he was in town he came to see her every day. I was glad of this for I had noticed that Alice hadn't been herself for some time; she seemed to have grown pettish and restless.

You see, at that time I was quite engrossed in my work. I had made some important discoveries in line geometry. You know, a line complex—ah, but you don't know, do you? No, of course not. Well, it doesn't matter. I was engrossed in my work and I had not paid Alice the attention that she required, I suppose. She was always saying something to me about my going about in a daze, and about my leaving things

where they should not be left—a thing which I tried to make Alice see was absurd, for a man's house is a place where he can deposit his things where he pleases. But no doubt she was right, for I am always losing things, and I probably would not do that if I always put them in a certain fixed place. Anyway, I suppose that I should have been more mindful of her; I suppose that it was my fault that she grew cross and irritable. So I was very glad to see her and Clarence Elridge take to each other so well.

I suppose that it is in the nature of a woman to require attention; I'm sure now that that was what Alice needed, for she became bright once more while Clarence was in town. And as soon as he left she became cross again. It seems to me now that her surly and resentful manner increased with the passage of the days, but I didn't pay much attention to it then for I was writing a paper on my discoveries for the Mathematical Journal.

On the morning of the day after I got the paper off I remember that while I was eating my breakfast Alice looked up from the paper that she had been reading to say, "Horace, 'The Barker' is in Kirby tonight at the Lyceum." I don't remember what I answered; something short and probably not relevant, for it was not till a while later that I had deduced that 'The Barker' was a play when I remembered that the Lyceum was a big theatre in Kirby. I think that Alice got angry when I made no more comment than my first short reply; anyway, she got up from the table quite suddenly and I did not see her again before I went to my nine o'clock class.

Now, that nine o'clock class is a first course in the integral calculus, and you know that many of these elementary students are not earnest workers. That morning, while half of the members of the class were working problems on the board one of the boys of the group that remained sitting took out a newspaper and began to read. Well, they're not supposed to read newspapers in my class. The board space is not large enough to accommodate all of them, that is why half remain sitting while the others go up to the board; but those who remain in their seats are supposed to be working problems in their note books. So when that chap took out his newspaper it angered me greatly. I know that I had a desire to pick him up and pitch him out of the window—he was too large, I couldn't have done that, but I had the desire anyway. I did go up to him, snap the paper out of his hand, and tell him that if he expected to remain in my class he had to change his attitude. I felt very excited. I mention the incident merely because that was the

way in which I got a paper that morning. After I took it from the boy I must have put it on my book on the desk and taken it to my office.

Later while in my office I noticed the paper before me and I began to read through it. I hadn't read a newspaper in a long time, but I seemed to recognize the headlines. That's partly why I don't read newspapers; they all say the same thing. About different people, no doubt, but always the same thing. Then, again, what do I care about who is elected to this and that and all that sort of thing; it doesn't affect me in the least. I looked through various sheets without noticing anything in particular until I came to an account of 'The Barker'. I stopped there because I remembered that Alice had mentioned it that morning. Well, I read on and found out that 'The Barker' was a show which had made a hit in New York and was now on the road. The paper recommended it highly. Now it came to me that when Alice mentioned it at breakfast she was hinting that we go see "The Barker" that night. Alice always did things like that; that is something I was never able to understand in her. If she wanted to go why didn't she say so? Of course, I might have said "No" for I don't like to go to entertainments very much, but how did she expect me to say "Yes" when she did not tell me what she wanted.

Well, I guess that I had not paid Alice much attention and it made her jumpy. Now that I had got my paper off to the Mathematical Journal I felt that I could be idle for a while, so I decided to get tickets for the show that night. I even got up quite a bit of enthusiasm about going to the show; not that I cared so much about it, but I knew that Alice would be delighted. I planned to give her a surprise. After my eleven o'clock class I got in my car, drove over to Kirby, and bought two tickets to 'The Barker'. I got home a little after lunch time and found Alice quite cross, but I tried to cheer her up and impart to her some of the enthusiasm that I felt that afternoon. She looked surprised to see me in that jovial mood; you see, I hadn't tried to be playful in a long time, and I suppose that it wasn't becoming in me by that time. Well, this strange regard from her dampened somewhat my spirit, but I told her as gaily as I could that I had a big surprise for her that night, and that I would not tell her about it till I returned from my office that afternoon. It seems to me that she should have guessed what it was that I had for her, but, as you will see, she didn't.

When I returned from my office Alice was not at home. Supper-time came and still she did not appear. I could not understand it. I grew restless. Surely she had understood that I had a surprise for her. The cook told me that Alice had said that I was to have supper alone.

She had probably gone to a bridge tea or something like that, I thought, so I ate and went up to my room to get dressed. But the hour for the show approached and Alice did not appear. I am not at all sentimental; but perhaps because of the enthusiasm that I had worked up about going to the show I began to feel quite hurt because Alice did not come in. When the hour for the commencement of the show passed I was feeling wretched. I took the tickets out of my pocket and I looked at them and then threw them in the fire. I think that tears came to my eyes. That must have been because I was angry, but I don't know. There was really nothing for me to be angry about for, you see, I had not told Alice that I was going to take her to the show. Still, I was pretty miserable. I got paper and pencil and tried to do something; I filled several sheets with meaningless marks; I could not get my mind off the non-appearance of Alice. I felt as disappointed as I had felt on several occasions as a child when I had not received something I had been expecting for a long time; that was a very unreasonable feeling, but I could not reason that night. As the night advanced my other feelings gave way to fear and anger. It was not unusual for Alice to be away at night, for she often spent the night at her sister's in Braswell; however, so far as I could remember, she had always let me know when she was going to do so. So tonight I had a feeling of apprehension that something had happened to her. Two or three times I was on the verge of picking up the telephone receiver to call up Chief Miers, but I thought of how foolish it was and I desisted. It was then that anger was the uppermost of my feelings. Alice should not have treated me like that, I thought; and I meant to let her know in decisive terms that her action had been inexcusable. Towards midnight I decided to go to bed, but midnight passed and still I sat in the living room.

It was some time after midnight that I heard Alice's voice. I was prepared to tell her many things, but now that I heard her voice a great relief set in on me and my anger ebbed. She looked very pretty and happy when she opened the door. "I didn't expect you to be up so late, Horace," she said when her eyes fell on me. Clarence Elridge came in behind her. "Hello, Professor," he said as he cordially shook my hand. Then Alice spoke: "Clarence and I had supper in Kirby and we went to see 'The Barker.' It was the best play. You found my note all right, didn't you, Horace?" I told her that I had not but that it made no difference, that I knew that she had gone either to Kirby or Braswell, and that I was not worried. I was really very hurt, but I was glad to see her so happy and I didn't want her to know what a miserable eve-

ning I had spent. She said that she had written a note on a large piece of paper and put it on the mirror of my dresser, and then I remembered that I had seen a paper there which I had taken down and placed under a weight on the dresser top. Unless I am looking for something definite I don't pay much attention to papers; I always have so many of them about. I really don't see how Alice expected me to know that that paper was a note for me. Well, she and Clarence laughed about it and I laughed too for, though I still felt hurt, I was glad that everything had turned out all right, I was glad, too, that I had destroyed the theatre tickets for Alice might have seen them and felt badly about it. As it was, she had forgotten that I had told her I had a surprise for her, so I was not called on to give her any of the surprises that I worked hard to think up. I felt quite guilty when they glanced at the papers that I had filled with rubbish, for I told them that I had spent the evening engrossed in a problem, but fortunately neither Alice nor Clarence knew anything about mathematics (though Clarence once sold mathematical books for Grey and Company) and they merely made some comment about the profundity of my mind when they saw the meaningless scribbling with which I had filled the papers.

This incident should amply demonstrate to you that I am not a jealous man. I would gladly skip over another incident but that the newspapers have been figuring it prominently—it is really beyond me to conceive how it ever got out. Didn't someone say something about stones having ears? Well, since every one is talking about it I will tell you what really happened. It will further show you that I'm not a jealous man and that I am reasonable, besides correcting some of the gross misstatements that have appeared in the press.

Sometime after the incident of which I spoke before I went to New York to attend a meeting of the Mathematical Society. I don't like meetings of any sort so I always avoid going to them, but I couldn't get out of this. Dr. Reynaud was supposed to go, he had prepared a paper to read at the meeting, but he was taken ill and I had to go in his stead. Dr. Reynaud has been doing some very brilliant work on transfinite numbers. He and I differed at the very start of his work, on the identity, for instance, of Cantor's first aleph with—but you don't know about that, do you? Well, it doesn't make any difference. I took his paper to New York and read it. The paper was very well done, as you would expect from Dr. Reynaud, and after reading it I was willing to adjust my views to his. The reason I had not done so before, I think, was because of Dr. Reynaud's excitable nature. You

see he gesticulates and talks so loudly when he is contradicted. I really did not contradict him. I merely could not accept some of his notions. But this has nothing to do with what I was saying. I mention it only to show how it was that I happened to attend the meeting of the Mathematical Society.

I was supposed to be in New York three or four days, but after I had read Dr. Reynaud's paper I decided to return home. There was really no object in my staying up there two or three days more, missing all those classes and all that, when I had done all that I was sent there to do. So I took the first train back home, and I got in at two in the morning. I entered my house very quietly so as not to disturb or frighten Alice. When I turned on the living room light I saw that there was a hat on the center table. I noticed it because my own hat was on my head—I felt up there with my hand—and I have only one hat; then, too, I would never have possessed a hat of such a light brown color. I picked it up and saw on the sweat band the letters "C. E. E."—those were Clarence Elridge's initials. I felt some concern because I thought that Clarence had been there calling on Alice and had left without his hat. I know that when I go out without mine I invariably catch cold.

When I reached the second floor I thought I discerned a slight commotion in our room. "Is that you?" asked Alice, and I assured her that it was. But the scuffling continued and I heard the key turn in the lock. I knocked on the door and called to Alice assuring her that it was I—that I had decided to return early from the meeting. "Oh, all right," she said at last and I noticed that her voice was perturbed. She opened the door and seemed very excited; she said a lot about not expecting me, and other things that sounded incoherent to me. I would have entered the room immediately to console her but I hesitated, for I heard a noise in the sewing room adjoining our bedroom as of someone stumbling over one of rickety tables there on which Alice puts her sewing things

My hesitation made me see what I was not supposed to see, for a few seconds after the noise I saw the door from the sewing room to the hall open and from it emerge a half dressed man with a bundle of clothes under his arm. He rushed down stairs and after a while I heard the front door shut with a bang. I remember thinking that he would catch cold, dressed as he was, for the night was quite chilly. I can't say for certain that it was Clarence Elridge whom I saw that night. The only light in the house was the light in our room, and the shaft of light that fell in the hall through the partly opened door did not allow me to see more than the man's silhouette. Clarence would have made

such a sihouette—and that together with the hat I had seen down stairs would tend to show that it was Clarence who had been in my room that night.

Well, I went in the room and saw Alice all humped up in the bed sobbing. "I suppose that you're going to divorce me," she said through her tears. She said other things but that is all I remember. It hadn't occurred to me to divorce her; in fact, nothing had occurred to me. You see, the whole thing was so far removed from anything within the range of my experience that a lot had to be readjusted within me before I could think of attempting to interpret my emotions. This thing about divorce was the first definite thought that came into my head, and that was because she spoke of it. I sat on the edge of the bed and looked at her. I was really not angry with her. I suppose that it was all my fault, for neglecting her as much as I had. I have come to the conclusion that women must have attention; I must not have given Alice as much as her spirit yearned for. Something very serious had happened, apparently, and something very drastic had to be done, I supposed.

Again the thought of divorce entered my mind, but what did I have to do with such things? That was something quite remote from my field. Furthermore, what would I do without Alice? We had been married six years and I depended on her for so many things. "There, there," I said patting her on the back; "Don't cry now. Of course I'm not going to divorce you. I'm very sorry." I probably didn't say just that but it was something like it. Alice cried a lot that night, and for a long time she avoided me as though I had done something to her that I should not have done. I suppose that she was embarrassed; well, I felt pretty uncertain myself for a few days. But after that we got along much better than we had been getting on. She was awfully sweet to me; as sweet as she used to be when we were first married. I have not seen Clarence Elridge since then.

You see, all this happened six months ago, so it could have no bearing on Friday's affair. When I entered the bath room Friday morning Alice was in the tub. I saw her white shoulders and back dripping from the warm water she squeezed on them from her sponge. I always liked Alice's shoulders; so white and firm and smooth—so unlike mine which are always full of rash and pimples. Alice used to say that I should take exercise, but they really don't bother me. I stepped up to the tub and kissed her wet shoulder. It thrilled me to do that—the wet, cold touch of her skin on my lips. I used to like to kiss her when she was wet

when we were first married, but I hadn't done it in many years. Then I turned to the washstand to shave.

As I stropped my razor my mind filled up with a problem that had evaded me for some days. You know, a bundle of planes on a point in three-space is a two dimensional aggregate which may be set in one-one correspondence with the lines of any plane—oh pshaw: I forget that you don't know about that. Well, that's immaterial. I wanted to set up an independent co-ordinate system within that bundle and extend the idea to other aggregates of hyperspace, and there were some very subtle points that confronted me. Now, as I stropped my razor that morning one of those points that had eluded me appeared quite clear before me. I was about to fix it when Alice began to sing.

Alice used to sing very frequently, and I always thought she had a sweet voice; but nothing could take my mind from my problems so readily as her singing. I have often asked her not to sing when I was thinking, but she never paid much attention to my request. I was usually very tactful, but there were times when I had got very angry with her. Her singing was the only thing that ever made me really angry with her, so she should have complied with my request; she knew how it aggravated me to have her sing when I was trying to think.

That morning I struggled hard to keep from vanishing that point which my mind had grasped, but it grew fainter and fainter as Alice's song increased in volume. It was maddening, I tell you. When a final quavering note completely shattered my thoughts I was in a blind rage. I turned quickly, grasped her hair with my left hand, and cut her throat with my razor until I struck something hard.

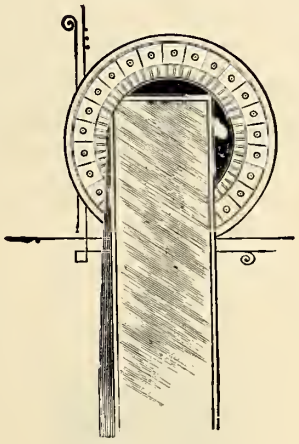
For a while I was stupified at what I had done. Alice's shoulders fell on the sloping back of the tub, but I still kept my hand on her hair and held her head up. I think I had a notion of stopping the bleeding by pushing forward on the neck so as to keep the gash closed. The blood flowed down her chest and then diffused in the soapy water. It reminded me of Glyco-Thymoline when you put it in water. I have never put Glyco-Thymoline in soapy water, and blood is of a different color, but still, this blood reminded me of it, the way it stained the water in the tub. I suppose that was because I always think of Glyco-Thymoline as blood when I dilute some in a glass to gargle.

The first thing that occurred to me when I realized that Alice was dead was to get rid of her. I thought of cutting her up into small bits and letting them go one by one down the toilet. I put my razor on her body and tried to cut but I was disgusted. I finished dressing and left

the house without going to breakfast. I got to my office an hour before my first class, but I couldn't do a thing there. I was wretched. I couldn't realize what had happened. I felt that I could not bear the thought that Alice was dead. I did not meet my nine o'clock class. At about nine thirty I went out. I thought of getting in my car and driving off, anywhere, away from there. I had no idea where I should go, but it made no difference; I could stand it no longer.

As I stepped into my car Chief Miers got in too, and told me that I was in his custody; he told me to drive to Kirby, and they've kept me here since then.

So you see, you can't say that I did it in a jealous fit. I think that I have amply demonstrated that I am a reasonable man, and not at all jealous. I can't explain Alice's death. I wish I could bring her back.



3 in 1

By Jon Juanjean

all your geese are swans, reverend.

Church steeples kill stars. Priests decorate
With pin-point eschatologies the demise (trite!)
Of homunculi ditchdiggers—cisatlantic
And Paree (*gai*), France, abroad, on the Continent.
Theosophy (bright moon navel blue belly God)
Panders virginal fecundity squandered on One—
Maugre venal venialities patina on microcosm.
Venite, Venite! more matzoth for maximal maxillæ!
"You needn't curse the moon or knock the stars half out,
Just 'cause she didn't feel what You were thinking 'bout."
Allow froward anchoress Aimee cocktail make
Celestial arcanum wit' Texas G. shimmy shake.
Permit ordure Fourth Estate swing monkey-like
From minus sign, scrambling a matutinal omelette
Of holophrastics from bland void's anæsthesia. O, let!



Photomaton

By Lionel Abelson

1

The eyes of dawn are guarding the honey caves.
Blind the eyes, blind the eyes, stone eyes, dyed darlings of God.
Over the rails I come
I the ninth avenue "L"
Lust for the honey caves
Lust to blind the dawn's eyes.

Foam is a white venus, a white unveiling
Of a madness. Foam bleeds. Foam
Cannot satiate. My wheels revolving
On the shrill agencies of infirmities
Grind her bleeding feet while the dawn grovels.

2

The air is sticky with smells and pomegranates,
With hairtonics, jets of toothpaste, bubbles of dew,
With tears that circle typewriters and planets,
The air is a nigger sweating blobs of glue.

3

She does not know that God within her breast
Thrusts greatness on her, that her swollen thighs
Are gateways to the world, her womb a city
Where the lost music of the world is caught.
Bread dangles an abortion from the roof.

4

He thought our spinning tops, our incandescent joys,
The candles that we lit on summer nights,
The alters to our lyrical white joys,
The vacuums encompassing our flights,
Challenge the thick pollution of your sneer
But we were whispers that love could not hear.

These shoes are tight she said, and he with blind
Uncomprehension touched her baby face.
Corrosions trickled from the blunted mind.
He licked his lips. A show tonight she said.
His nerves were crying to him you are dead.

5

Implacable the train pressed space between
Its destinies like white froth from a boil.

6

The child, a slain, satanic victory
Bawled for a cracker. Shut the damn kid up!
A hunted animal the mother stared
At the circle of dead baying to a moon
Of bundled nerves against the essential lust.
She saw their fangs, black, full of cavities,
Their indigestions girding stinking arms.
Children are empty bags. She puffed him wide
And stuffed her mutiliations down his throat.

7

These blind eyes mutter scalding mysteries,
Dumb exaltations batter these rouged lips,
These hands have indexed cardboard agonies,
Upon this brow a furtive music sits.

8

Avoiding the dripsweats, the asphyxiations,
She thrust against the door. Their breaths came
Like dirty lovers fingering her throat.
No powder on her nose. Starvation tore
The pictured, printed flesh her hands upheld.

Is there a banquet where men feed on steel
Pour molten lead from wineglasses of bone
And boiling thoughts glow upward from the breath
The mind breathes; and bone, thought, mind,
Drunk with the steel wine and the brandy lead
Burn to one metal that is singing, white,
And bleeds like flesh?

Her eyes were wandering
To the dawn's cave where the honey sleeps
And foam with bleeding feet dances beyond
The groaning ruptures prostrate in the street.
The page the wage Rialto Follies theft. . . .
Behind stood Hamlet in collegiate clothes,
Hamlet with eyes that undermined the smoke
And hands that pressed across and down her back.

Hamlet had lusted for the essential glow,
The mystic candalabra that is starred
With candles dripping phosphorus defeats.
His hand went lower, touched her buttocks now. . . .
Man's body a white drink, a black cup. And now the dawn
Was a curdled hemorrhage, foam's bleeding feet
Lay on the track before the ninth avenue "L". . . .

9

You cannot flee but I go grinding on
To ultimate sepulchres where abscessed steel
And epileptic coals and skinny men
Shed dry consumptive tears that drip and rot,
And hearts like tickless clocks and cavities
Stuff neat, immaculate, shining garbage cans
Under the revelling electric lights.



Chant Royal de Cretois

(Freely adapted from the French of Henry de Montherlant)

By A. LE NOIL

MY BODY desires annihilation. I am sick with hatred. God, show me emptiness before I die, let vacuity come like a conqueror, and matter wrinkle and dissolve. I hate the touch of touch, the sight of sight and my hate is a hectic decay that is as sickening as love. Each evening like the desire to seek flesh the desire to kill but to kill without tiring comes to me like a negress with insane hands. It is too much to be king among men, too much to guide them. Alas, it is better to be alone, a pig, than to be happy among them.

This wind is as stupid as an animal, and it is necessary to die without having killed the wind.

I the king speak to the black eyelashes, to you dreaming in the desert. I am going to break my pact with the brute and with the young ones who sleep in the open drain of my breast. I am not gluted with the springs which flow beneath your palms. My lust for you is a magnet for every star. O that we were able to envelope ourselves in an embrace as flies go coupled, that we were carried to the constellations on the giant back of space like a flower that the tortoise carries from the watter on his shell!

The birds of ecstacy nest in your eyes. The melody of the world inundates your hair. The agony hurled against your breast bursts against my lips with a cry of happiness. I cut the throat of the brute and adore on your features the thing that dies.

Trivia

Narcissa

La belle dame sans merci hath me in thrall; for Narcissa, who is a fay, is my gentle friend. She is half Puck and half Miranda and altogether charming. She is small and thin and dark, and her black eyes crinkle at the corners like her mouth, in a sad, amusing fashion. They are tired and very merry. Narcissa knows all manner of curious tales so that one never grows weary of listening to them. Sometimes we have talked all night and then at dawn have plunged into a mountain pool to wake the morning stars. And I have spread Narcissa's shadowy hair in the sunlight to watch it dry and to see the sun eat up the shadows and leave sunbeams in their places. Afterward I have twined arbutus like a wreath around her forehead and have brought for her delight the first pale anemones so that I might see her smile and feel her pleasure and lie idly by her side on the warm sunny rocks. Again I have read to her tales of my own invention full of monstrous and delicate fancies and I have told her my secrets and all the shy and tender thoughts that might have died still-born. And Narcissa has read to me snatches from idylls and fairy tales and from the vain musings of Merlin. My gentle friend loves the strange taste of curious words in her mouth, and on her skin the light caress of fine soft textures. She loves the feel and colour of living things, the down of pussy-willows and the velvet fur of a hound's throat. Narcissa's slippers should be fashioned from the wings of humming birds. Perhaps she will wear them when we hear *The Afternoon of a Faun*. I should never take her to hear Wagner. She might become frightened and fly away. But we are quite safe with Saint-Saëns and Debussy. Narcissa listens with her body curiously alert. I can feel music tinkling in the tiny nerves at her finger tips. My lady may be a lass with a delicate air. Or again, a shepherd lad, piping down the valleys wild, piping songs of pleasant glee. At other times she is Cynthia, and seated in her silver chair, state in wonted manner keeps. She can run and she can ride and she can whistle. When we go tramping, the hills send all her funny little tunes safely back to her. Often we run races together. The bay and the sorrel mare are equally matched, so that the game is one of skill. Once my friend and I leaped a stream at the same moment, our mounts rising and soaring, and striking the earth again, hoofs together. Narcissa is at once close and aloof, pulsing and tenuous. Always I am seeking for her. But it is only rarely that I catch her peeping in the mirror.

MARGARET BEAUFORT MILLER.

Suspended Amen

It has been some years, I think, since I offered up a sincere prayer to whatever gods there may be.

Flat on my back, beneath tall pines, I watched one recent afternoon the slow hynotic sway of the tree-tops over me. Half way between my eyes and the moving pine crests, a dogwood tree spread branches loaded with flat white blossoms. "How delightful," I thought, "it would be to have all that waxy whiteness suddenly shatter down, cover me in white and weightless wonder, like some unnatural summer snow. What a largess of sensation to mingle the resinous odor of the pine needles and the clear blue sky above with the winter white of the dogwood flowers." So I prayed, with all the poetic feeling and cacophonous alliteration that I could muster,—and in deep seriousness, mind!—that I, whom the days past had granted but slight food for thought, might have a winter and a summer, superimposed and commingled, to hold in my hands, dream over, and fling, upon rising, back in the face of the breeze.

This morning, rising in the dreariness of a cold and empty house, strangely thoughtful during the usual routine of my ablutions, I heard the hands of the rain ticking, with pointed nails, neat punctuation for my thinking against the panes.—Ah, how justly had I withheld the "Amen" of my last prayer.

A Tragic Love

There was nothing combative or belligerent to be discovered in the usual mein of my first love. She had appeared the evening before, and had taken, with a calm and green-eyed egoism that matched my own, complete possession of my room. Now I have no congenital affection for cats, least of all for black cats. "Scat!" I had cried, resenting this feline intrusion with all the fervor of a solitary. My visitor had deigned no answering statement or gesture, merely invading, with slow and deliberate surety, my very bed. I bowed my head, for I felt that an affinity, in the face of which I was only an inadequacy, had been established.

We lived together simply. On purloined bits of luncheons she feasted, digesting happily upon the foot of my couch, or in my lap, for I was reading a Russian novel long drawn out and thoughtful. I knew happiness when she purred against my breast. She grew fat, sleek, her eyes less watchfully green.

One evening (an unfortunate occurrence) I allowed myself to be seduced by some riotous acquaintances, and returned loquacious and unsteady, drunk, in fact, to our four-walled home. I expected an open condemnation of my faithless and unsavory aberration; I was met with a sadness contemplative and adorative, and I took sorry refuge in anger. Now anger is merely a physical spasm. At first, a dispersive and wasteful burst of blind energy,—an annoying interruption, a smouldering sullenness, a peevish irritation, a murderous revenge may be engendered.

"Wretch, beast," I muttered vehemently, "I shall bathe you!"

The bath, though I frequently paused to bolster up my failing courage with a variety of moral reflections, was not a success. My love, once thoroughly wet, refused obstinately to dry. Crouching, bedraggled and hideous, she damned me utterly, wetly. I no longer loved. I became a man at that moment; my childhood fell forever away; I felt myself at once blasé, surfeited,—a sophisticate. And with the most charming, with the most extreme courtesy, I repeat, with the most perfect courtesy I plucked up my love by the nape, and flung her out of my window.

J. JUANJEAN.

Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty and Graduate School of the University of Not Carolina in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Sociology.

In this dissertation and attempt is made, by a correlation of certain related facts in philology, ethnology, and anthropology, to establish the origin and trace the descent of the Jewish, and incidentally of the human, race. The theory is proposed that not only were the Jews the original race, but all races are related to and descended from the Jews.

The conclusions drawn are based on an etymological study of the common Jewish family name *Cohen* with its many variations such as *Cone, Kahn,* and so forth. It is first deduced that the Chinese races are directly descended from the Jewish race. This thesis is established by a demonstration of the relationship existing between the Chinese form *Khan,* or ruler and the *Khan* variant of the more common form *Cohen.* The variant is traced in its descent through its several uses by the Persians, Tatars, and Afghans, who were, as it will follow obviously, more immediate descendants than the Chinese.

That the Negro race is historically a second main branch of the original Jewish race is established from the distinct relationship existing between the variant *Cone* and the popular synonymous term for Negro, i.e., *Coon.* The theory is advanced that the Negroes are descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

The fundamental contention of the study is that the Jews are the original race from which all human races existing today are ultimately descended. The proof for this theory is not based on Biblical authority, but takes into account the process of evolution and assumes that man descended from a lower form of animal. The thesis is maintained that the Jews were the first to come down from trees. It is safe to assume that these trees may have been coniferous, that is, *Cone*-bearing, from whence is derived this common variant of *Cohen.*

HOJN EVILO.

True Tragedy

My raincoat . . . It was precious . . . With its color of toasted marshmallow—its lining of deep grasshopper-green; was it not fairer than the fairest of women?

After all, women and raincoats are much alike. Congeniality in either is exceedingly rare. Verily, more to be desired than silver and gold.

But let us continue. It was a night in June.

It was on the aforementioned night in June—otherwise rainy and dismal to a depressing degree that I was seized with the uncontrollable desire to possess that priceless jewel—my raincoat.

Rudely exposed to the gaze of an unseeing public it lay ensconced behind an immense plate of crystal glass. By the most sacred tokens of St. Peter and St. Paul, I swore that it should be mine on the morrow.

Yet how oft doth resolution prove in vain. In the glorious sunshine of another day I easily repented of that most solemn vow.

Hardly had I repented than it began to rain.

Blindly I retraced my steps. In the very depths of the ghetto I purchased it.

And the shower? It had vanished as frost before a summer's sun.

From that time my raincoat and I celebrated a species of life by common consent. If I wished it to rain, never would I carry it. If I wished it to be fair, it was my inseparable companion. Thus was established a sort of "modus vivendi" which was the basis of our domestic peace.

Where could have been a more perfect couple? Ours was a union of two beings; the one reasonable, the other unreasonable. True Matrimony—was it not?

Returning from work, tired and wet, I would find it snugly fastened on its hook, or laid out upon the bed. Its presence at such a time would naturally enrage me.

Ah. . . . How like conjugal felicity.

Still, there was some difference between this union and marriage with a female.

I could express the most logical statements without fear of contradiction. Never did it refuse to accompany me anywhere; never discussed my every command; never argued that at mid-day it was night.

So—I was wearied to the point of disparaging it.

Something like two weeks ago, I took a walk after supper as is my custom. It was a beautiful evening. The heavens were as clear—

> As with the snow-white plumage of their wings
> Celestial spirits should have swept away
> The heavy ragged lacings of the clouds.

I was walking alone, viewing in the distance the verdure of the fields which covered the slopes of Mount Ajusco. Suddenly I felt an overpowering desire to flee the troubled precincts of the city, and revel in the glory of those fields.

A car passed at a leisurely gait. I bargained with its driver for the trip.

Later, I returned to the city with the vision of animate nature in my eyes; and on consulting my watch I commanded to be let down several blocks from my house.

I paid the sum agreed upon, opened the bus and descended, with the queer empty feeling one experiences when losing a friend. What was it? I could not think.

In the distance, the lights of the car twinkled an instant . . . and vanished

Suddenly, out of a clear heavens came a most formidable clap of thunder. Instantly the sky was darkened and gruesome drops of rain began to fall.

I gave a cry of anguish. My precious raincoat.

The rain increased momentarily. I took a step—another—finally in a sudden downpour I fled precipitately.

I do not know how, blinded by the rain, wet to the skin and terrified, I made out my house. Surely it never rained after such fashion before.

PERCY.

Creed of a Not so Young Child

By JON JUANJEAN

What is is,
And what isn't is:

I keep not my brothers,
My love's my mother's,
I have a father—
Why bother?

O Crow of Eternity!
Hast thou assembled thy percept
Of the sound a pebble makes
When flung into a tin pail?
Casually concern thyself with this concept:
The similarity of that *plink*
With the local symbol *think*.

—J. JUANJEAN.

Sweet Mama Do Right

By Lewis Alexander

I gits up in the mornin'
And works out hard all day.
I comes home in the evenin'
And gives him all my pay.

I don't know why he does it
But he sho does treat me mean
Hit ain't no way to do me
As good as I is been.

He goes out nearly every night
And stays the whole night th'u.
What is there for a workin' girl
Like po' ole me to do?

Can't raise my hand and fight him
For he's too big and strong.
But I can't stand this sort a thing
I gits for much more long.

Can't take no gun and shoot him
Because I loves him so.
Can't take no train and leave him
Cause I'll need him where I'll go.

I guess I'll have to be satisfied
To git him when I can;
For no one knows but Gawd jus'
How I loves that big black man.

Hell's Vestibule

To Kate

By Lloyd Bass

There is just one star in the sky tonight
Shedding on me a beautiful light.
Without that star the sky would be gray.
And I, a stranger, would lose my way.
One star up there in the sky above
Is leading me on in the path of love.
Will it ever go out? Will it last 'til dawn?
Or will its faithful light keep leading me on?
And though you lead me on through lands afar,
I'll follow you always, O Kate, My Star.

Unrequited

By Yeliab Drawoh

Your love came to my heart one day
And knocked, and knocked, and knocked
But the keeper was not at home
So my heart
Was locked, and locked, and locked . . .

But just as your love turned the corner,
Receding from my heart's door,
My heart's keeper returned and called you—
But there was nothing to be seen
'Cept the corner
And a red brick store.

Comrades

By John F. Smith

The sun shines bright upon the mountain peak,
And O my son, the summit calls me there;
I hear the tongues above the cloudmists speak
In thin small accents in the upper air;
I cannot go and leave you to despair
Where blighting winds will sear your youthful cheek,
Where evil angels hover near to wreak
Foul vengeance on earth's innocent and fair;

So come, my son, we'll climb the steeps together,
And hand in hand we'll journey on our way;
I'll be your stay whatever be the weather,
And you'll be mine whate'er befalls the day;
And if perchance we reach the lofty height
We're comrades while we gaze upon the glorious sight.

To a Broken Dream

By Lawrence Rhodes

I sat and thought and dreamed last night
Of you.
And while I thought and dreamed last night
The waning candle lost its light,
And in a dream, I dreamed I might
Be losing you.

And while I dreamed another came
To you.
And your sweet head was bowed in shame,
Your sinful act I need not name,
Oh foul, damned woman you are to blame,
Cursed be you.

When I awoke, shaking with fear
Of you,
And realized you were still dear,
I tried to hate you and to sneer,
But pure or not you have no peer
I need you.

Lost at Sea

By W. B. Harriss

God! how dark the big world seems.
And the thundering and falling of all my broken dreams.
The air is filled with tumult, the room is reeling round.
The devil's calling loudly for the failure he has found.
Failure—yes, a failure; a ship that's lost at sea.
The devil's prongs are sticking and they dance and jump at me.
See the faces of my schoolmates, all are turned away in shame
At the wreck that proved a failure, and who trampled down his name.
Yes, they laugh and scorn me rightly; for my brains are rotting dust,
And they look on me with scowls and they brand me with disgust.
I've dreamed too much, that's the trouble; I've thought what a man I would be,
And now the darkness has fallen; I'm a ship that's lost at sea.
The buoy tolls it's warning, but the captain takes no heed,
And the ship unguided, lonely, sails on with greater speed.
The rocks loom up before it, but ah! it is too late,
And the ship with its worthless cargo goes down to its luckless fate.
But what does it matter to others, just another lost at sea,
While the swash of the waves wash over the ship that used to be.

I am down, I am out, ah! fellows, give me a hand that's strong.
No! I don't need it—I'll swear it—I'll prove I can get along.
Though my dreams are all broken and shattered, I'll build them stronger this time,
And they'll hold much rarer treasure than ever a king can find;
For this time I'll work while I build them, and they will mean for me
A man with a heart of ambition, not a ship that is lost at sea.

Te Deum Laudamus

By John F. Smith

We thank Thee, Lord, for life so sweet,
For the joy and friends we daily meet
Along the way;
For song of bird, and the flowers that blow,
For the power of thought and the will to know,
For the quest of truth and desire to grow
Through every day.

We thank Thee, Lord, for the dreams of youth,
For the breadth and depth of the wells of truth
We often see;
For the fleeting clouds and the autumn breeze,
For ships that sail the uncharted seas
And lives that are spent on bended knees
In search of Thee.

We thank Thee, too, for the manly soul
Who girds himself for the distant goal
In life's great race;
For the glorious light of the rising sun,
For golden tints when the day is done,
And the joy that comes when the race is won
Before Thy face.

Masquerade

By Emmett Wilson

Laugh, laugh, poor fool!
Keep your nonsense flying
Through the air like flashing darts
Pierced with hilarity;
On with the game, you merry fool;
Play the jester, ape the ghoul;
Wring from the frozen face a smile,
Wrest from the warm his laughter light;
Feign well your role beneath the mask,
And hide still your age-old sadness.
Ay, but you must remember ever
That even in the crypt of mirth
Melancholy darkly lingers,
Ready to clutch with icy hands.
Laugh, laugh, poor fool,
For the curtain is up, your speech is due,
And the show must forever go on!

The Football Man

By W. W. Craven, M.D.

In classic halls and on campus green
Of every college in this wide land,
A youth of giant strength is seen—
He's known as the football man.

His shoulders are broad, his face is lean,
His eyes can both smile and command;
The idol of his college it would seem,
This strapping fellow—the football man.

Great glorious specimens of physical young manhood,
Fashioned by the Almighty hand,
Fitted for places where heroes have stood—
This clan of the football man.

Thews of Hercules guard his manly frame,
His stride indicates both grit and sand.
He's the kind from whom Caesar came,
This stalwart son—the football man.

For honor and glory of college he fights,
For fair play making instant demand,
Always standing for what seems right,
This rugged athlete—the football man.

From North to South, and coast to coast,
Love and loyalty guides his hand;
That is why men praise and toast
This sturdy lad—the football man.

He circles the ends, and smashes the line;
Swift as a tiger he comes from behind—
Whether for your school or whether for mine
He's a bearcat—this football man.

With steadfast courage he tries to stay
Onrushing backs—like Custer's immortal band,
Win or lose, there's no other way,
For those having trained as a football man.

When battle raged fiercest by land and sea,
Where men were dying to save homeland,
Where the courage of a lion alone could be,
There was many a football man.

At deadly zero hour of early dawn,
When khaki waves crossed No-Man's-Land,
Among those braves who had furthest gone
Was the stilled form of the football man.

In Belleau Wood and on River Meuse,
Where the grim reaper was in full command,
Where the dogs of Mars on earth were loose,
There too was the football man.

In the silent halls of eternal fame,
There is many a cherished name,
First made glorious by this game
That's played by the football man.

Release

Dark thoughts go flapping through my mind
Like birds in drizzling rain.
A buzzing bee drones wearily
Against the window pane.

He beats the pane; I battle life
What are we fighting for?
Poor fools! The window's wide below;
The pistols in the drawer.

The Harp

Man's soul is like a silent harp
Whose unborn harmony
Of sadness and of joy
Of madness and of hate
Needs but to be brushed
By the great elemental
Forces to become
Madly throbbing melodies.

—Jack J. B. Brooks.

Poem

I long for the land I've never seen,
The land where Dame Fortune is kind.
Where riches are mine for the taking,
The land where to think is to achieve,
That land is only in the mind.

—R. P. Waynick.

book bazaar

A Blind Mask Crying

CAWDOR AND OTHER POEMS. By Robinson Jeffers. Boni & Liveright. $2.50.

Jeffers' mind has all the characteristics of a hawk: talons, beak, pinions and a preoccupation with the sky. Humanity is a blind mask crying to be split with eye-holes, and Jeffers wants to slit the mask with a mountain peak and does not care whether he rips it to a string of limp rags, if only the eyeballs may burst outwards, the cage of the eagle of vision torn open. There is no pity in Jeffers. He cannot warm the sick with tears. Peace is only to be found in the crucifixion of man, out of his nail pierced matter the white lightning leaps upward. And the terrible truth is that humanity flees the agony that is its salvation. The hells endure their labor pangs, the valleys the acid touch of blight, the ocean is a cosmos of epic defeat. But man everywhere searches for patent medicines. He invents vehicles to spare him hardships, law courts to settle his disputes, governments to pour Utopia down his throat.

"For itself humanity is the coal to kindle, the atom to be split." But the coal fears kindling, the atom cries out against its division. But Jeffers ignores the factual world. His characters leap upon their agonizing fates, hurl themselves against their terrible destinies and the electricity of their annihilation casts a red fire in which the humanity of humanity is decomposed and the dried ashes of the dissolution sing beauty.

And pain is as tender as a mother. Within the forest of claws and nails is peace the lover. Not the peace of exhausted strength, but the "white fawn in the dell of fire."

> "It saw, according to the right of its kind, the archetype
> Body of life a beaked carniverous desire
> Self-upheld on storm-broad wings: but the eyes
> Were spouts of blood; the eyes were gashed out; dark blood
> Ran from the ruinous eye-pits to the hook of the beak
> And rained on the waste spaces of empty heaven.
> Yet the great Life continued; yet the great Life
> Was beautiful, and she drank her defeat, and devoured
> Her famine for food."

L. Abelson.

American Criticism. By Norman Foerster. Boston and New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company. $3.50.

The history and import of "American" Criticism has long been talked about but very little understood. Books, of course, have been reviewed here in America as elsewhere. But from what bias have they been criticised? To what have the critics objected? To what ideal have they pointed? How have successive American critics built one upon the other? These problems Mr. Foerster sets out to untangle. Nor are these ordinary questions for the esthetic critic or historian. It is not difficult to explain Boileau, or Horace, or for the most part Plato, as these and most of the other great critics whom we know were self-conscious critics, imbued with the importance of their calling both to the present and to the future. American criticism, appearing as it did in the full flower of the Romantic Movement, was prone to underestimate the critic in favor of the artist; consequently the non-artist critic was brow-beaten and the artist critic beginning with a bias drawn from his own works rather than from the entire past and present was led into many pitfalls from which he extricated himself at the cost of many contradictions. Mr. Foerster shows us the method and the failings of each.

Once through this maze we almost think of Mr. Foerster as the proverbial Russian who went to study the elephant in its native haunts for ten years only to report after his strenuous research that there was no elephant! And certainly if the book teaches us anything it is that such a thing as an "American" criticism or an "American" tradition does not exist. This is not to say that the book is a failure—far from it—Mr. Foerster has made an heroic effort to marshal all the facts in the case, all the disjointed, unorganized evidence. He has gone further: he has analyzed this mass (it must be remembered that none of the critics who dealt with Poe, Emerson, Lowell, Whitman, left anything even faintly resembling an *Art Poétique*) and he has systematized it as much as possible.

Once he has shown the bankruptcy of the "American" tradition, Mr. Foerster passes on to the present. In this last chapter of his book Mr. Foerster exposes fully the bias with which his subject has been regarded. That is something of an innovation. Mr. Saintsbury and Mr. Spingarn have written similar books, with biasses quite as strong as Mr. Foerster's, but they have not explained their prejudices to us and we are forced to tread cautionsly through their work. But Mr. Foerster shows us the ax, the grindstone, the man with an ax to grind, and the sparks flying in every direction.

We are told again that not in America will we find a tradition worthy of the name. Nor will we find it in any other one place or in any time. It is high time for Americans to realize that just as they inherit race and feature from the rest of the world they have inherited also and will continue to inherit esthetic tradition. The so-called New Humanism, of which Mr. Foerster is a disciple, proposes then that we search through all that we have from the past and choose from the works which are acknowledged to be the greatest those elements which are common to all.

and which, therefore, may be assumed to be factors in this greatness. Chief among these elements of greatness is, according to Mr. Foerster, the conscious ethical purpose of the writer, the triumph of the ethos over the pathos, the inner conflict of the individual with freewill to choose and to act, and finally his triumph over himself.

It is this ethic of the New Humanists which has aroused the most violent opposition. Naturalism, Realism, Expressionism, Impressionism and all the rest are useful but by no means should they be accepted as exclusive creeds. Each has something to offer, but not one can picture to us man as he *ought* to be, which is the ideal of the New Humanists as contrasted with the Romantic object of painting man as he would *like* to be and Naturalism as he *is* or *appears* to be. A great deal of strength for Mr. Foerster's position may be found in the work which his opponents encourage: the obscene, fantastical meanderings of a James Joyce, the wretched journalism of Theodore Dreiser, the appalling spectacle of recent salons at Paris and elsewhere where the younger artists show their work. A caricature recently published in a French journal an artist congratulating himself on the great crowds he has drawn to his picture simply by hanging it upside down. But buildings turned awry, jazz orchestras with a good stock of *tours de force* as taken seriously, and the monologues of prostitutes passed off as great literature are unfortunately not isolated phenomena in an age which lacks strong restraining guidance. Surely men are as brilliant as they ever were and they are apparently much more productive, but in their present leaderless state little has been produced and little may be expected beyond an accretion of literary sports, possibly original but lacking in any other virtue, if indeed originality may be called a virtue at all.

If Mr. Foerster has outlined a very feasible plan for the evaluation of books written in the past, he has, it seems to me somewhat neglected the present. So far, at least in this country, the New Humanists have remained safely behind academic walls, refusing or disdaining, with the exception of occasional sallies, to take a hand in present day letters. The late Stuart Sherman was probably more active in contemporary criticism than any of the others, but in so far as the school is concerned he was at least partially a failure. His early diatribe against Mr. Dreiser, for example, is as lacking in restraint and in proportion as the worst Mr. Mencken has ever given us, and his partial conversion later shows the difficulty of recognizing those universals which with various other factors of smaller importance stamp the good book from the bad. It may be that Mr. Foerster's last chapter is the assembling call for an active participation in what is being written and criticized today. Let us hope so, for even if the principles of the New Humanists are not adopted *in toto* they will force the opposition to take stock of itself. If the New Humanists are now prepared to start the fight *pour de bon,* then we may permit ourselves to hope if not for the millennium at least for an amelioration of the present state of chaos.

Mr. Foerster should not belittle the strength of his opposition. He must go further in his discussion of present day problems, using as examples the works which are appearing day by day, and especially the contemporary masterpices which

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are hardly off the press, such as the lengthy novel of Marcel Proust. Furthermore, Mr. Foerster cannot be satisfied with merely telling us that the New Humanists look to St. Francis, he must tell us how and to what in St. Francis. Why, again, is Racine not included in the list which is proud of Sophocles? And finally, what are we to do with Aristophanes, Ariosto, Rabelais, Moliere, in short the satiric and the comic? There is no word for their likes in the book, and surely Mr. Foerster does not intend to leave us high and dry on an island of seriousness with only bread and water to nourish us. What shell we do about the wine drinkers?

M. L. Radoff.



Edited by JOHN MARSHALL — GORDON GRAY, *Business Manager*

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At Barricades

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

The bristly bee has trivial scope
To brim the honeycomb with lucent amber
From restricted field and bounded slope.

No rose whorled forth from bud may clamber
Thornily up, green joint by joint, to flout
Its lowly root and pierce the tautened camber

Of a circle shutting roses out.
Hills retard the dawn. Body to body, still
Love's citadel is cinctured high about.

So roses, heavy with pendant bees, fulfill
Their buds on stems, and hearts may well be where
Calm hearts should be as feet strike down upon a sill
That fronts no door but tense impenetrable air.

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Professor With Umbrella

By Warren Taylor

LET US understand these things clearly. The professor had come to feel that April afternoons were very different from April mornings. In the mornings gales and leaves were astir. He held himself erect against their motion as he walked among them, but he felt that he was insecure.

The professor ate his toast and drank his coffee. Before he could nestle himself for a few freshly sunlit moments of the day in his arm chair which always sat by his shelf of books, he saw the morning news sheet. He could not remember why it was so carefully laid on the table every morning for him, for he rarely opened it. Rarely would he draw it near his eyes, nose into it and say amid his dry staccato chuckling, "My dear, there is some writing here of a lady who will live with her husband no longer. Some are so very unfortunate. Can you even remember the unusual years that we have spent together so beautifully?"

At that moment he recalled with an inner comfort and warmth which caused his white cheeks to redden, the years he had spent in searching for the unalterable principles that had been disclosed finally to him. He had sought and he had found. Quite unexpectedly but delightfully he had set himself into a manner that had given him a name and that had brought ladies who were wearing heavily flounced dresses and whose hair was combed so elegantly high and was jewelled, to recognize his genius. Then the world had seemed to him to be very

reasonable. Ideals in flounces still bowed gently and moved gracefully. The gavotte was still played. He had been grand and he had been happy in those days, and the youthfulness of them remained for him. Many who were young and could see that he was old might smile and tell him that the virtues that he had honored and the ethics that had comforted him might not have been all that he had believed they were, but he would chuckle and in the confidence of both himself and his god see plainly that those who did so had not yet deserved the names of men and women.

The professor went to the window, drew back the curtain, and looked into the street. The world that was loved by many and the things that were in it might pass by his house. He might look out upon them. He turned to his wife and said, "My dear, the people who pass our house are always very busy. They are devotedly in love with something, and they ride eagerly here and there while they search for it. If you will check my class book, I may sit here for a trifle and review my notes. Yes, dear, thank you."

The professor had written the notebooks when he was very young, but that was so long ago scarcely anyone could now find or could make oneself able in any way to discuss with him the books from which the excerpts he had written had been copied. As he read there in his study during this April morning he did not greatly care if that were true. If he had been among other people, he might have been more mindful of the differences that existed between them. He might have desired to walk away from them and find contentment in solitude. At this moment he was alive with the enjoyment of the things that he had learned and with an awareness of the tender exactitude with which he had allowed their essences and their variations to roll again to other souls. Often he would quote lines which expressed perfectly his emotion.

After the professor had reread the notebooks, he walked across the campus. His eyes were filled with the faces of men and women. They were filled also with the interiors of laboratories, jars, desks, geometrical figures, nomenclatures, blackboards and with chairs in which sat cleanly shaven young men who so frequently announced discoveries that he could not understand, that perhaps made him desire to walk away from the campus and linger in the beautiful green spaces where men and women were not riding this way and that seeking the things that they loved so devotedly, where the air was quiet and clear, where it was not monotonously beaten and tempestuously set into motion by the movement of cars.

In his own classrooms there were young men and women with hair prettily combed and with carefully chosen dress who sat before him, listened to his works, and remained silent. He often felt that they were shutting up within themselves many tentacles which might reach forward and overwhelm him, but he little thought that their years were other than his and that their ideas were not of the kind that could easily become like his.

Morning, dialectic and youth were over. There was the food that he greatly cared for which his wife had prepared for him.

"My dear, the afternoon will be very pleasing. We are now amid an ideal spring."

She said, "Yes" sweetly and sat down at the table.

"This afternoon," he continued, "I shall walk in the park. I greatly love the quietude. There is usually so little to disturb one there."

The lunch ended and he slept. There was no need to look in the notebooks for the lecture of to-morrow. That could be done in the morning when his body was refreshed after the sleep of a night, when he was abler to labour and to sow. Somewhere he knew the minds of those primly dressed men and women were thorny and barren places, that they were ground from which nothing might spring.

His morning and his sleep had come to an end. He felt that April afternoons were very different from April mornings. In the afternoons he could be with himself. He could walk far into the secluded groves of the park.

"I may not need an umbrella this afternoon, my dear, but if you think it better, I will carry one. We never know about spring afternoons. We should be prepared."

Gone is the morning and the tiring life is over, he thought. There was a gardener hovering over a flower bed. Should he stop and talk with him? No. The ivy-colored wall to which he would hasten was far ahead. There no one ever came, there he could wander among the intricate shrubs, there he could play hide-and-seek with shadows and allow his placid soul to become ebullient among the trees that were newly green.

The professor stepped upon a shadow and the sun was obliterated. The light was softened, and when he looked up, clouds that might have seemed as disquieting as theories newly blown, or as the din of automobiles which carried men and women to seek the things that they loved so devotedly, were nestling over his head.

The professor knew that he would not run. There was little need for running. The clouds had collected quietly and had struck gently. The sun was again shining and an April rain was falling. This was a greater solitude than he had believed that he would find, although he had wondered once if he should carry an umbrella at all.

One could not carry umbrellas into classrooms, unfold them before oneself that the young men and women might not see or be seen, and talk only to ribs and black cloth, he thought. Afternoons and lonely parks were different. The world could not beat down upon him there; the natural could not harm him. The professor raised his umbrella and gathered himself closely under it as he sat down on the ground. The rain fell gently on the umbrella, and he was safe. How beautiful to look from an umbrella at the grass and the rain and the sunlight, he thought. How beautiful is the child snug and unborn, he thought.

The Fruit of Morning

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

This day was gleaming fruit
 The tree of morning bore.
My ears were stormed with bruit
 Of ecstasy in store.

When I plucked it from the bough
 And held it to my lips.
But no, I said, not now
 The pulp unto the pips,

And pressed it to my heart.
 So complete the mind's piqued knives
Have pared its flesh apart
 That now the dusk-fall shrives

Me to confess I hold nothing
 But dried peelings and a core.
This day was casual offspring
 The tree of morning bore.



Delabrement (Matin)

By John Mebane

Fantastic reverberations catechize the silence of crepuscule matin,
Susurrantly. The dawn-ruddy lips of morning effervesce bubbles of mist.
Maelstrom entices, sinks translucent teeth in rotting flesh.
Mountains whirl; low trees point efflorescent fingers through the sun.
I hide. Decay leers across the edges of the horizon.

This is no sanctum. The touch of the air is amylaceous.
I shudder. Faster, faster, o pale yellow goddess, *ventre à terre.*
Escape crushes against buried shoals. Kabobonokka sniffles
And pouts albuminous lips to shape a scowl.
There is no rest; only the swaying of tender, succulent stalks.

Faster, yet faster, o seductive mistress! Unclasp pale hands,
Throttle the tender peaks with your multisonous laugh!
Vultures have plucked out the eyes of the universe
Leaving the reddened sockets to bleed cochineal
And dye the earth. I feel your breath upon my cheek.
Faster, faster, o pale yellow goddess!

The Necessity of Surfaces

A Note on a Certain Deficiency in American Literature

By Charles Wood

MORE and more as the days pass I learn to loathe those people who are given to settling world problems, especially those malignant ones who confine their efforts to the field of literature, dividing it into good and bad with the painful hair-splitting of the pure absolutist, so it is almost with apology that I undertake the dubious task of saying anything that has no respected school to reinforce it. Frankly, the man who relies on the supposed freedom of speech nowadays is laying himself open to all manner of attacks from all manner of cults that are as hidebound and dogmatic as those of the middle ages. The word tolerance has become a kind of shield that has the strength of deception, which every opposing faction thrusts between itself and the foe. For instance the Modernist intolerantly flays the Fundamentalist for his lack of tolerance. Again, if one ventures the suggestion that American literature pales sadly when compared with that of Europe, he is immediately stamped with the stigma of intolerance, and told that American literature cannot be comparable to European because there is no cover-standard that can adequately permit the two to be judged in the light of each other's merits. The two are too significantly the product of their respective environments to be arrayed against each other in respect to quality; American literature is just as good but according to a different standard than one would apply to European. In that manner one's attempts to criticise American literature just because it is essentially American literature, are scoffed at. Nevertheless, I cannot avoid seeing a difference, and one that is far in favor of the Continental.

In this paper I propose to suggest one reason that seems to me to be a partial explanation of the inferiority of literature on this side. Now, no one has to admit that there is an inferiority. I merely claim to see one. This is entirely personal and my remarks may well be nothing more than opinions.

Much has been said approving Emerson's and Whitman's advice to the coming American writers, requesting them to break with literary tradition and create a school of their own. The argument seemed to be that since we had broken with England politically the next step was to violate all the rules of literature as well. Americans have been doing that very conscientiously for the past fifty years, and with a great deal of praise. Yet, I cannot see why a political break can change the texture of human minds or emotions, at any rate not to the extent that it would require the creation of new literary forms.

In all the works of the best European writers of the past few decades there is obviously some literary theory behind the writing. For instance, the long work *Remembrance of Things Past,* by Marcel Proust, is an epic in that it springs polished and complete from the mind of an author who was evidently working with a conscious literary theory. Proust gave no attention to the social trends and ephemeral fads of his era. He had a greater motive, that of creating something that would stand because of its pure timelessness. Men forget events, they forget history, but the esthetic questionings of the Greeks are just as pertinent today as they were two thousand years ago. Proust will live because he was concerned with the comparatively small thing of tasting taste.

Now there is no such thing in American literature, not as much as there was in the time of Poe. We are experimentalists, too proud or too ignorant to make use of the European literary history which is but part of our natural tradition and heritage. At present the dominating theme of American writers is one of Sociology. This is particularly true in the South, which is rapidly becoming a literary frontier. In this particular branch of writing one has no end of useful and harmless diversions, such as the theoretical solution of hypothetical problems, and the no less than rollicking sport of turning up syphilitic families for public disapproval. The war between Capitalism and Labor, the problem of the Negro, the tenant farmer and the immigration question are the mainstays of American writers, now that the Wild West is no longer wild. All these things are ephemeral. Most of the discussion about them began in just earnestness, but it ends in mere faddism. Nothing of value can come of what at best is only literary exploitation of the present physicalities of civilization.

However, in justice, one must admit that we have no maturity as a nation that is adequate to support a deeply sophisticated literature. (I am using sophistication in the finer sense of the word.) The national

mind is exuberantly youthful and ignorant, what is worse it is hopeful, not philosophically, but naïvely optimistic. The typical American scene permits only the crudest literary utilization. Enormous cities abound but their only landmarks are skyscrapers, and these are changed every ten years. Where is the American equivalent of Capri, enchanted with tradition, where Norman Douglass, the best of the sophisticates, places the action of *South Wind,* the best of his novels? Indeed where is the average American whose conversational powers entitle him to an introduction to the characters of *South Wind*? Where is the American college that does not discourage the acquisition of the leisurely polish and tolerant cynicism of Aldous Huxley? Or where is the American university that can furnish the atmosphere for a novel like *Zuleika Dobson*? The American university can teach one to plant wheat and grow dollars, but it doesn't teach one the difference between eating and dining, nor does it advise one how to spend the dollars when they are grown. In fact, nine out of ten of the young American writers think that literature and abnormal psychology are synonymous terms. An urbane stranger, let him be from France if you like, must conclude upon his first visit to America that we have only recently discovered that love could be used for other purposes than racial propagation. He will learn with surprise that we make so much noise about a thing that he takes as a matter of course. He will find with amusement that the American's conception of art is a vague combination of hazy ideas comprising all the unmentionables from long hair to lewd women.

His attitude will be more tolerant, however, if he prolongs his stay long enough to read Ben Hecht's *Humpty Dumpty* and Viña Delmar's *Bad Girl.* He immediately decides that one can't expect much from an ordinary citizen when the authors themselves are as awkward as an adolescent boy. Indeed the only American writers who can handle a sex situation without resorting to exclamation points, are Ernest Hemmingway and Thornton Wilder, and Wilder's first chapter of *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* is an echo of Madame de Sévigné. Perhaps Robert Nathan deserves honorable mention, but he had to introduce an angel into the plot of *The Bishop's Wife* in order to make the American public see that love was not wholly a matter of copulation. The Continental writer takes his characters from the circles of polite society, but the average American ferrets his out of brothels and breweries. The Continental charms with wit, while the American staggers one with adultery, rape, and murder. This is called realism; it is realism in that it presents half the picture.

In America we have Theodore Dreiser, who in his novel *The Genius* has attempted a psychological treatment of sex, but his touch is everywhere crude. It is long, labored and utterly tiresome, consisting of a series of seductions that are bald and bawdy, and thoroughly without any romantic appeal. In brief, he is sensational and nothing more. In contrast there is the novel *Swann's Way* by Marcel Proust. Proust introduces the reader to Odette, who to the impassive eye, is just such a woman as T. S. Eliot has depicted in the poem *Portrait of a Lady,* perfectly capable of experimenting with love and surrounding herself with the customary paraphernalia for inducing it in its most sentimental and falsely dramatic form.

> Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
> You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—
> With "I have saved this afternoon for you";
> And four wax candles in the darkened room,
> Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead:
> An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb
> Prepared for all things to be said, or left unsaid.

Proust projects Swann into this situation with consummate skill, making it perfectly lucid that a man of Swann's taste and emotion, under the sway of passion could be taken in by this sentimental mirage. Odette's beauty veiled all her faults to his eyes. Unconsciously Swann ascribed to her all the gentleness of soul and refined reciprocity that her physical loveliness seemed to warrant. Swann being something of a fine gentleman had experienced loves before, but fortunately he had been able to take from them their pleasure without giving to them any of his soul, and to end them before satiety had robbed him of even memories. But with Odette this was impossible. Mastered by love, like a young boy, his desire asserted its selfishness in efforts to please, to adore, and serve its object. One follows the clever and polished Swann through this submissive metamorphosis, and learns to sympathize with him rather than to disdain him. One sees him the victim of a love that is only a shadow, but a shadow which he believes to be real. But Proust is too much the artist to leave off at this juncture. He allows Swann to discover the shallowness of Odette, without losing at all the desire for her. Swann first learns that her intelligence deserves no admiration. He still clings on, comforting himself with mere beauty. We pardon him. Later he learns that her virtue is a myth; former lovers return and are welcomed. Despairingly he becomes prostrate, he be-

seeches, makes conditions, proclaims his jealousy. We pity him. Just as an opium eater, conscious of the power of the drug, is unable to resist it and secures it in humiliation and self-confessed weakness, Swann realizes the impossibility of relinquishing Odette. From inconstant mistress he elevates her to the position of adulterous wife, finding in this vague sense of authorized possession some surfeit of grief. The horror and tragedy of it all is that Swann, who is intelligent and introspective, sees his position, that of a conscious and non-belligerent cuckold, with painful accuracy yet can do nothing about it.

We see everywhere in Proust's work the existence of a literary theory that shows he knew definitely what he was about, and that he had the time and ability to accomplish his purpose in a leisurely manner. Compared to him Dreiser is as awkward and banal as a farmhand.

I have tried to show that a rigorous adherence to Emerson's theory of American literature must result in crudeness, because America is as yet crude. I would not be understood, however, to claim that we have nothing of literary value, for where there are people there is literary material; yet I can honestly say that I believe we offer only satiric material to a writer of superior talent. We have industrialized writers, who handle the stock mountain story, the catalogued labor story, and the infernal sociological problem, with the technique of big business. No doubt a great deal of the trouble lies in the fact that the reading public is composed primarily of our academic groups and of female literary clubs. A college professor's commendation ruins an author, because the public has a violent distrust for the colleges. They are associated with the anti-prohibition league and the theory of evolution, the socialist party and the Anti-Christ sect, atheism and free love. All these things are anathemas to the public mind. And as for the Woman's Literary Society that graces every hamlet—it is fundamentally an institution of entertainment and not of edification. Having talked to many of its members I am in a position to know. Most of them are quite zealous and affirm that they think "literature is so interesting." Of course these individuals, and there are more of them than you suspect, are responsible for the incomes of many authors without whom the country would be far better.

I have stated that our tradition is meagre, and that our social roots are all embedded in European soil. If we choose to ignore these facts our literature must forever remain false and illegitimate. Art in its ultimate sense cannot be a national thing; there are some things that

are bad in any language, just as there are others cosmopolitanly good. Therefore, I take it that American authors and authors-to-be should be taught to respect the tradition of the old country as part of our own, and in their writing to emulate the best that Europe has to offer, not with humility, but with just pride.

Sonnet

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

Most solemnly, in ordained way, last night
 I garnered Truth from manuscript, nor wept,
As once, that Beauty was withheld from sight,
 But designated each from each and slept.
At dawn a bird awakened me to say,
 Those things you found last night are lost, or dead,
Are echoes lingering in hills. This day
 For laughter, perhaps for love, I said.
But when I found no eye that would confide,
 My laughter paled like a shortening flame—endure,
I said. A squirrel then, sardonic eyed,
 Looked straight at me. O I shall be secure
As long as I am waked from lethargy
By song and such satiric levity!

Where Blue Begins

By Charles Wood

Somewhere there must be a meaning in this fire
That we burn here beneath night's canopy.
Cannot this flame be nourished tenderly
Before in trailing smoke it must expire?
Must love's first bed be too its funeral pyre,
And morning winds blow ashes dustily,
And wail a dirge upon that ecstasy
That danced at dusk before the wingéd lyre?

Somewhere behind the crimson doors of dawn
Slow liquid fires shall warm and never burn,
And your soft cry and unreproaching moan
No dismal day to puzzled wrath shall turn.
Slow, slow, the morn will come and it shall bring
No retrospect, nor any hidden sting.

Avowal

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

How many lover lads and girls have said,
Of you alone I shall be most aware
When death's slow step is loud upon the stair?
Thus did I repeat the tenets of the dead.

One day we knew—amid these days that go
Fleet-footed all, as though at end of quest
Reward were held—one day when love's old jest
Made play with circumstance and time's flux and flow.

Now again the days stride onward. Now should death
From recent plundering ascend this stair,
I know that of you I should be least aware,
But most concerned with pain, with need of breath.

She Said

By John Mebane

these modern poets are gawdallmighty
(she said metaphrastically)
that is they think (i think)
(they think) they are

it takes rulers to measure
the words they use
tapelines
and gallon buckets

yeah i know yeah i know
harpsichords are out of fashion
and whoopskirts
and buttercups

but why dont they use
the greek tragic muse
at least words
i mean
not these lewd abortions
and uncanny queer contortions
nor silly porno graphy
my gawd it drives me gaffy
but something sweet
like bluelets
and ragged robins

oyes oyes
i know its trite
but still they might
write a touching sort of pome
on dandelions love or rome

this stuff they write
makes me
goggle-
eyed
im damned and i know
i dont like it so

cummings stephens and james joyce
got a hell of a loud voice
and gertrude stein
(liebbe gott mein!)

why listen just the other day
i heard some girls
with blond curls
say
that jolas was adorable
i swear its just deplorable

because someday i really mean
someday
theyll start planting trees like that
and making homes
and ships
and fords

like that
(she said
metaphrastically)

Midges Dance With Seas At Shore

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

Thunder on sturdy thresholds of the seas
 Is safely ominous: acrid life still swarms
 Like summer gnats; though moons be cold, earth warms
A strong brew, bold wine of flesh, mulled sap of trees.
Though waves should rise to split a continent,
 The dance of dust enlivened by this wine
 Would throng the night. Dawn's probable design
To break precise at dawn is great content.
Music from no brown viol, no suave string,
 Far music calls—night calls—and the dance retains
 Its whirling haste. Sparseness of time constrains
The mind to joy; intent, no glad mouths sing.
And no voice muses ridently on races
Returning measuredly to starting places.

With Calmness

By Charles Wood

Like day is born, at night it dies.
The sky is flecked with blood; it cries.
And bits of cloud like tattered cloth,
Are seeped in red and fringed with froth.
And day is a gash in darkness,
With darkness a dream of day.
And how silently ruthless with calmness
They mock at the tribute we pay.

Sufficiently Casual

By Dane Wilsey

IT WAS not raining. The boy with the overcoat walked against the wind which made little spirals of the dust that had dried too quickly on the roads. If the dust annoyed you, you sniffed quickly and quietly against the wind and drew in the corners of your mouth.

In the town, most of the people were without their overcoats that would have flapped close to them in the wind. The people stood in groups before the stores with their hands thrust in their pockets, walked down the street, or disappeared in doorways, walking slowly with a rythmic swinging of the body. In the whole town there wasn't any molasses taffy. The people in the stores said, no, there isn't any demand for it. One man said,

"We have some peanut brittle. There is molasses in that."

It was tiresome looking for molasses taffy when none of the stores carried it. Does molasses taffy become so important that you can tire yourself with it? In New York you bought a big slab of it that weighed a pound, yellow and thick, and you cracked it against something hard through the waxed paper. It was boring, and it did no good to think about molasses taffy. It would be nice to have a lot of good pre-war Scotch. That last was almost used up. To sit and drink it would be rosy and peaceful and would loosen up the insides. It was only the middle of the week, though. Is that the way habits are formed—wanting to drink Scotch in the middle of the week? It is strange that it should come so late, that it shouldn't be felt earlier in life.

Four of the people were standing and talking in front of a drug store. The wind blew the hair of the boy who gestured with four stiff fingers and glanced continually out of the corner of his eye. He looked as if he thought someone was looking at him or as if he was looking for someone.

"Of course that stuff we printed was a lot of slop. It's not as bad as we could have done."

Someone beside him in an overcoat had just arrived. He was lighting a cigarette and looking at his reflection in the window.

"The egocentric predicament," he said. "The ineluctable modality of art."

Someone laughed. If you looked, you could see the spittle on his lips. The boy with the four stiff fingers pushed them gently against the overcoat. He glanced out of the corner of his eye.

"I told him he was in an eccentric quandary, and he hasn't figured it out yet."

"Yeah. That's one I forgot—an eccentric quandary." The boy who was fixing the stem of his pipe said,

"By the way, what does eclectic mean?"

"It was an old philosophy. They tried to combine different forms of philosophy." He looked quickly at the man who had laughed. "I hear you're trying to give your class a vocabulary."

"I had to do something so they could keep up with you. Educating the public, you know."

The boy with the overcoat looked in the window and said,

"Yes, that's an ideal. You should be grateful."

One of them rocked on his feet and extended four fingers stiffly.

"Until you've lost your soul and acquired a vocabulary, you're not a man."

"That's you in a nutshell. Vocabulary and no soul."

The man who had laughed walked to the curb.

"Anybody going this way?"

Some of them shook their heads.

"What do we want to work for?"

Two of them walked in the drug store.

"I'm going to have a dope."

"Well, I don't want one but I'll watch you." And then he pointed four stiff fingers at the boy with the overcoat and said,

"But you can give me a cigarette." He pushed his fingers against the coat. "That's what I was really leading up to." He smiled and curled his lips around the cigarette.

"Then you're crazy, because I'd have given you both." They stood watching two girls who came in and walked to a table in the back. A big boy who had talked with them on the sidewalk came in looking over his shoulder at the two girls and leaned on the counter beside the boys.

"You know," he said, "the best thing of all to do is to lose your soul and forget your vocabulary and to chase females."

"There's a lot of truth in that too. That's the trouble with all these philosophies, there's points in every one of them."

"Yes, but that's only a fragment. You remember how we were talking the other night—you have to have a whole system. Then everyone's got to admit it."

"Sure. Unless you can attack one of the fundamental premises of the system."

"Oh—well—but you can attack anything."

The boy with the overcoat nodded and looked at the brown ice at the bottom of the paper cup.

Two of them walked out—one of them thrusting back his overcoat and the other carrying his fingers stiffly. They stood on the curb and rocked on their heels.

"I've got half an hour to kill," said one. He pulled out his watch and looked at it. His fingers were no longer stiff but had become curiously graceful. It was a quarter to four.

"Fifteen minutes," he said. "You know, I want you to come down to the beach when I go. Pick up some women and some liquor."

"Well. I'd like that."

"Don't bring any women from this town, though."

"Of course not. There aren't any."

"Did you ever see a place like it? If you meet a woman with a good body and a good face, you know that the minute you talk to them, it'll be all over."

"But there are plenty of women with good bodies and good faces and a lot of sense, but not around here."

"Yeah. But when I get home I'll have one in a week. A little old, maybe, but . . . well."

"You and your sex appeal."

"Hell, women never take you for your sex appeal. Or for your looks either."

"What do they take you for then?"

"For some little reason of their own. Maybe it'll be because your back is thin. Some of them are some kind of perverts that way."

"Yeah."

"They're easy. You got to be theoretical."

They stood looking at each other, smiling a little bit because they felt good. The wind flapped the coat of a woman with a blue sweater who climbed beside them on the curb and walked into a doorway. She looked soft under the sweater. Her breast hung flabby and big when you saw it from the side. They both made noises in their throats and then looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders.

"You know, I had a tough break with a woman."

The boy with the overcoat was conscious of a shadow over his shoulder. A big man was standing there who had small eyes and was sucking at a pipe. He said something that the boy in the overcoat could not hear.

"No, I don't," said the other boy, staring at the man and holding his fingers stiffly.

"What did he say?"

"He asked if we knew her."

"No, I'm sorry, but I don't," said the boy in the overcoat to the big man. He tried to make his eyes wide and friendly and to smile a little as he said it.

"I thought maybe she was one of the stenographers over there," the man said very low.

"Perhaps. It's quite probable."

The conversation bored him and he looked at the boy who held his stiff fingers in his pocket. Then they both looked at the man, who walked slowly and looked about him as he approached the door that the girl had entered. He turned the knob and closed the door behind him.

"I'll bet it was the breast that got him," the boy in the overcoat said. They both laughed, but they felt rather silly. Something had gone out of them.

Pamela Stokes

By J. J. Slade, Jr.

THE WAILING violins and the warbling flutes filled the oppressive air in the large hall with the mawkish strain of a hackneyed popular waltz. Men in high stiff collars and dark serge suits swung their partners about. There was little gaiety in their faces, for besides the torture of the collars and the hot apparel there were other things that fettered joy: their partner's bodies must be kept at the proper distance from their own and their feet, hidden beneath voluminous ruffles and flounces, must not be stepped on, time must be kept to the music, neighboring swirling couples must be evaded—all this to do at once, with grace, caused the bewhiskered masculine visages to cloud with the grimace of a slight but insistent pain.

The little orchestra ceased its burden and the spinning couples stopped. The men took out their handkerchiefs and wiped their brows and necks and dried the tops of their wilting collars. Smiles returned to their faces as they offered their arms to their partners to escort them back to the row of chairs against the wall.

Pretty, vivacious Emily Brown was led by her lanky escort to the end of the hall to an unoccupied chair next to where sat Pamela Stokes.

"Oh, that horrid Blackmar man," said the Brown girl as her partner made his awkward departure. "I wish he'd never dance with me again. My poor, poor feet." She looked critically at the trim little shoes that protruded from beneath her skirts. Pamela looked enviously at those little feet, but she was not conscious of her envy. Pamela did not dance. She always went to dances and sat by her mother and watcher the other girls being swung around by the young men. She enjoyed to watch people dance. It had never occurred to anyone to think of Pamela dancing—she was so good, so complacent, as fine a girl as could be found; yes, one could say many things about Pamela but one never thought of her dancing, if one ever thought of her at all.

Pamela herself never thought of dancing. She thought of men's arms pressing her waist, she thought of men's eyes looking into her eyes, she dreamed of men—but these images were the extent of her

desires. Now she looked at the little feet that Emily was twisting about the better to survey Pamela thought of big feet—men's feet—and she felt them press her own.

"Oh Pamela! Look at Mr. Remington from Muncie. Isn't he a handsome man! I hope he dances with me a lot tonight. Ooh, he's a beautiful dancer, Pamela." Pamela's eyes turned towards the corner of the hall where the handsome newcomer, Richard Remington, leaned against a slender post and mopped his face with his handkerchief. The sight of him made her being expand with a gentle warmth. Her cheeks could feel the moisture that his handkerchief absorbed from his face. Emily's gay chatter was lost as it mingled with the babble in the hall.

The music began to play. Men selected partners. Someone asked Emily to dance. Soon the couples swirled slowly past Pamela's eyes, and her smile showed the pleasure of her soul. Then a surge of warm blood suffused her head and her sight grew hazy, for out of the swaying mass of dancers emerged Richard Remington and he took the seat that Emily had just left.

"How do you do, Miss Pamela," said he as he slowly ran his handkerchief over his brow. Pamela nodded. She could not speak; the faint odor from Remington's warm body intoxicated her senses.

"My, one can't dance in this hall; it's so warm in here," he continued.

"Yes, it's very warm," said the girl almost inaudibly. "Oh, I can hardly breathe."

"Don't you want to go out for a walk?" asked the man replacing the handkerchief in its pocket.

"Oh—yes—for a walk," for a while she was uncertain what to say or do, then she turned to her mother. "Oh, Mamma, may I go out with Mr. Remington?"

"May I take Miss Pamela out to get some fresh air, Mrs. Stokes?" asked Remington rising.

"Why, of course, Mr. Remington," answered Mrs. Stokes with her blandest smile. "Yes dear, you may go. Take your shawl. The night is beautiful."

Pamela's body rose from the chair. Her hand slipped through Remington's arm. Her head swam delightfully. She was not conscious that her legs moved; she and the man beside her floated out to the moonlit night. There among the fantastic shadows of the trees they walked; the moon cast a silver charm over them.

Remington talked. Pamela was silent but she did not hear his words. Her eyes drank in Remington's beauty. Unconsciously she

pressed his arm to her side; its warmth interfered with her breathing. Remington ceased his talking. He became aware of the woman beside him and saw her bathed in the glory of the moonlight. In the shelter of a tree's shadow they stopped; he looked into her eyes which burned in the mellow light. All that she had seen in her dreams, the vague yearning of her spirit, was materialized. She felt the pressure of his arm about her waist, his hot breath on her face, his burning lips on hers; she was engulfed in unknown delights. Time fled unnoticed. The two walked under the smiling moon and stopped for delicious minutes in the shelter of the dense shadows.

"It is late," said Richard hoarsely. "The dance is about over. Will you let me drive you home? My buggy is outside." Pamela assented; she would go tell her mother.

As they entered the gas lit hall Remington became uncomfortable; he felt the stare of innumerable eyes on them. He lowered his head; out of the corner of his eye he could see the round shiny face of his partner on which the merciless gas light revealed a liquid, guilty smile. Damn her, why did she have to smile. He took her to her mother and after mumbling something he ran the gauntlet of the stares and left the hall.

"Mr. Remington is going to drive me home, Mamma," said Pamela when her escort left. "He has gone to hitch up."

"All right, darling," said Mrs. Stokes with her broadest smile. "The Howards are going to drive me home. We were just waiting for you. I'll leave the door unlatched for you . . ." and here Mrs. Stokes proceeded to bid voluble goodnights to the people about and to let them all know that little Pamela would go home later with Mr. Remington from Muncie. Pamela met the stares of the occupants of the hall with an ever broadening smile. She watched her mother leave and settled down to wait for Remington's return.

On the porch outside the hall, away from the stinging looks and venomous whispers, Richard Remington lingered. He felt a faint nausea and slight cramps below his waist. He had acted like a fool with that Stokes girl. He was angry with her and with himself.

"You didn't dance very much tonight." The rippling tones of Emily Brown's voice broke his uncomfortable revery. An inveigling perfume soothed his burdened spirit. Richard looked up. The girl approached, radiant in the moon's soft glow.

Need I tell what ensued—how Richard was bewitched by the girl's sympathy and perfect understanding; how when she said, "Oh, won't

you drive me home Mr. Remington? That dull Mr. Demming has been hours hitching up, and I really can't wait . . ." his reason had ceased to function? This part of the story needs no relation. Richard being mere man conducted Miss Emily to his buggy, hitched up, and drove off. Demming swore lustily, no doubt, and vowed many things when he returned and found his partner gone. But as he too was mere man he probably drove to the Brown home a few days later with a bouquet of flowers for Miss Emily to entreat her to accompany him on a ride through the country—but this is all conjecture; these people are no longer in our story.

In the hall the music finished the goodnight waltz. The laughter and the disorder of leave taking began to subside as the people slowly left the stuffy hall. Alone, sitting where he had left her, waited Pamela for Richard's return, the liquid smile set in her shiny face. The crowd of people dwindled and still Pamela waited, but now the smile began to fade. She looked expectantly towards the door through which Remington had left. Only a few older people were left in the hall now. Pamela became aware of their looks. Her smile was gone. Misgivings entered her trusting soul, worry wrinkled her brow. The sound of voices of the departing people outside grew fainter and then was gone. The people who still lingered near the door appeared to be waiting for Pamela's companion to return, so that the girl would not be left alone in the hall.

The disagreeable thought came to Pamela that if Richard did not return soon the women by the door would come to ask her questions. She noticed that an old man, probably the keeper, was turning out the lights. With the greatest unconcern that she could assume and taking advantage of something that momentarily attracted the people's attention from her Pamela got up and slipped through the door through which she and Richard had gone out in the moonlight earlier that night.

Outside Pamela hid in the shadows. She saw the hall darken as the old man turned out the lights. She heard the last guests depart. The doors closed and were locked. The old man's footsteps resounded strangely in the stillness of the night; then he, too, left, his feet crushing the gravel ever more faintly as he receded into the night. A strange, disquieting stillness pervaded the neighborhood. Pamela grew afraid —for a long time she dared not leave the shadow which engulfed her. If she had retained hopes that Richard would come back these left her now. She forced herself out of the grounds into the street. In vain she looked about; not a sign of life could she perceive. She walked

through the lonesome streets, feeling miserably alone. Occasionally dogs barked at her from behind low fences and she shook with fear as she scurried by. Once she passed a policeman who stared at her suspiciously; at the sight of him she regained some of her courage. Later she was thrown into a panic when two men appeared to follow her. At last she reached her house. Quietly she slipped in, turned out the hall light that her mother had left burning for her, and tip-toed to her room. There she flung herself on her bed and the storm of grief which darkened her soul burst into a flood of tears and rending sobs.

* * * * *

This happened many years ago. Few remember those days during which happened what my pen records. Today memory was refreshened by the account in the press of the passing from this life of the great feminist, Miss Pamela Stokes, who became notorious by her constant fight for the supremacy of woman over man and the suppression of idle diversions. The press was kind to her memory for, in spite of her many eccentricities and extravagances, she was a notable civic worker, but commentators spoke of the fanaticism with which she always attacked the creature man. All agreed that in her breast no love had ever entered, aside from the unnatural affection she had for her eight dogs which, by the way, were lavishly provided for in her will.



book bazaar

A Woman's Love Life

AN AUTUMN LOVE CYCLE. By Georgia Douglas Johnson. Harold Vinal Co., Ltd. $1.50.

With the appearance of Georgia Douglas Johnson's *Autumn Love Cycle,* we have but another reason for acclaiming her the foremost woman poet of the Negro Literary Renaissance. The heart of womanhood speaks as in her first book, but with more intensity, finer feeling, greater felicity and surer abandon. Her message is stripped bare of superfluities; thereby making it more human and stronger in appeal because of its utter simplicity. Begin the cycle with the poet, "I closed my shutters tight last night" and as it were you are concealed in a sanctum with an exceptional soul who pours its heart throbs out to you like pearls from a time lashed river bed. Her pen does not stride nor does it flash; but moves quiescently despite the turbulent agencies which are the impetus.

The emotions expressed stir the heart, heat the brow; but the poet holds herself in sweet control. Hardly can one find lovelier lyrics than "Proving," "A Paradox," "Welt," and "Review."

The cycle is divided quite ingenuously into five sections, one lacing naturally into the other. Many a sonnet sequence has been written, but this is the most consistently arranged lyrical sequence that has come beneath my notice. The thing itself is a distinct contribution to the poetry of the world, for without a doubt it is universal in appeal and for that reason deserves a very wide reading. *An Autumn Love Cycle* contains some of the most beautiful lyrics of this age, and Love, the world old theme, is very refreshingly used. To get a better understanding of the eternal feminine read *An Autumn Love Cycle.* That you may get a retrospective view of a woman's love life, read this pageant in rhyme. After reviewing all its tragic charm, I was indeed greatly relieved by the lines from the beautiful summarizing lyric "Afterglow"—

> For every glancing golden gleam,
> I offer gladly—pain
> And I would give a thousand worlds
> To live it all again.

Lewis Alexander.

White Folks

MAMBA'S DAUGHTERS. By Du Bose Heyward. Doubleday Doran. $2.50.

Those who are ready to criticise an author whenever he departs in any detail from his established *milieu,* may find in *Mamba's Daughters* what they are looking for. In *Porgy,* Mr. Heyward treated the Negro in his relations with Negroes. In his latest novel, however, he offers an intelligent and sympathetic study of the Negro and "his white people." Thus the book becomes more than a Negro novel.

The plot of the story involves the old waterfront Negress, Mamba, who cunningly allied herself with a white family, the Wentworths, in order to further the interests of her granddaughter, Lissa. Here the author is handling a theme which one who does not know the South cannot readily appreciate, for there is a great difference between Negroes who have white people and those who have not. The family Negro feels that his whites form an adequate and necessary barrier between him and the Law. Such a barrier was particularly needed in Mamba's affairs because Hagar, the mother of Lissa, while a good soul, was prone to drunkenness. And so it came about that wise old Mamba ingratiated herself with the Wentworth family, that they might assist her in securing service with the Atkinsons, a rich northern family, trying to worm into Charleston society. Having accomplished all this, the rest of Mamba's story is how, by foresight and indomitable courage, she propelled Lissa to success as a singer. There is a companion story concerning the fortunes of the Wentworth family, Charleston aristocracy, and the love of Saint Wentworth for Valerie, the sister of Atkinson.

This novel seems to reflect, more truly than any other I have read, the real situation that exists in inter-racial relations. Mr. Heyward sums up the national attitude toward the Negro most admirably when he says that the North loves him as a race and hates him as an individual, while the South loves him as an individual and hates him as a race. Nor does Mr. Heyward overlook the tragedy in the lives of those superior Negroes, who like Lissa, find themselves without a people.

Charles Wood.

"Old, Old, With Silver Hair"

MIDSUMMER NIGHT AND OTHER TALES IN VERSE. By John Masefield. 1928. New York: The MacMillan Company. $2.50.

In his new book Masefield retells the old Arthurian legends, the tales that so many English writers have tried to give final form. Tennyson came nearest expressing the spirit of the age of chivalry in his magnificent *Idyls of the King.*

But even he fell short of writing the epic that he had hoped to give to English literature. When Masefield turns to the myths of old England he does not write with the pen of a Vergil or a Homer. He has hardly come up to the standard set by Mr. Tennyson; we rather suspect that his new book smacks more of John Erskine's *Galahad* than Tennyson's *Idyls*.

In a number of narratives written in the moving poetic style that has characterized Masefield's rise to fame, the story of Arthur's exploits and the deeds of his round table live again. The book draws its name from the poem "Midsummer Night" in which the characters come to life and speak to the author. The legend goes that once each summer Arthur and his men come back to this world; the author has talked to them on that night. Many of the lesser known Arthur legends are told. We believe there is more detail about the birth of Arthur and the relations of Guinevere and Lancelot than we have seen any where else.

High standards of craftsmanship are observed in Mr. Masefield's telling of the stories; his imagery and similies have a slight tendency to become rather commonplace at times, but there is freshness and beauty always recurring. From the standpoint of technicalities, we find no fault with the verse. Exhibiting his usual fine feeling for words, Masefield has vivified the action by the use of many old English words contemporary to Arthur. While the rhythm of the verse does not always ring true, there is a sparke of vivacity and lightness which adds a fine flavor to the tales.

Masefield has not yet passed into the third and greatest period of his art, as many of his critics were predicting he would. His genius does not find as true expression in folk lore as in the tales of the sea. He has forsaken the field of his true work and gone to a subject that naturally requires a lot of artificiality and affectation. In this field his voice is not as authentic as E. A. Robinson's.

Mid-Summer Night will delight many of the followers of Masefield, for here we find good poetry. It is charming pastime, and worth while study, but not great poetry. To write a book such as this one is an achievement, but it does not reach a new high level for the man who has given us *Dauber* and *The Everlasting Mercy*.

J. D. McNairy, Jr.

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The Writers

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A D

Nocturne Varial

By Lewis Alexander

I came as a shadow,
I stand now a light;
The depth of my darkness
Transfigures your night.

My soul is a nocturne
Each note is a star;
The light will not blind you
So look where you are.

The radiance is soothing.
There's warmth in the light.
I came as a shadow,
To dazzle your night!

Comment

This Negro Play Number, the third issue of The Magazine in the past three years to be devoted to contemporary Negro writers, is (as were the ones edited by Julian Starr in 1927 and D. S. Gardner in 1928) printed from material collected or written by Lewis Alexander. It is possible only through his ability and importance as a poet, playwright, actor and director, and his knowledge of current Negro literature.

Lewis Alexander is best known as a poet. He has contributed to *Palms, Palo Verde, The Troubador, Fire,* and The Magazine. Poems of his were included in Braithwaite's *Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1927* and Cullen's *Caroling Dusk.* He acted on Broadway in 1923 with the Ethiopian Art Theatre, appearing in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* and Wilde's *Salome.* He has directed several community play groups and is now directing The St. Vincent DePaul Players of Washington, D. C. The Krigwa Players are to stage his one-act fantasy "Pierrot at Sea" early in the fall of this year. *The Crisis* of May 1928 printed his poem "A Tree," which was awarded a prize as the second best contribution to that month's issue.

The four playwrights of the younger Negro group presented in this number have all won prizes in *The Crisis* and *Opportunity* contests.

—The Editor.

THE
CAROLINA
MAGAZINE

VOLUME 59 NUMBER 7

Undertow

By Eulalie Spence

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

DAN—the man
HATTIE—the man's wife
CHARLEY—their son
CLEM—the other woman
MRS. WILKES—a lodger

SCENE: Harlem. The dining room in Hattie's private house. It is a cheerful room, never sunny, but well furnished and spotless from shining floor to snowy linen. The supper dishes have been cleared away, but the table is still set for one who did not appear. Double doors opening upon the hall are at center back. At right there is a door leading to the kitchen. At the left there are two windows facing the street.

TIME: About eight o'clock one winter's night.

AT RISE: Hattie is sitting at the head of the table frowning heavily at the place of the one who did not appear. She drums impatiently with her fingers for a few seconds then pushing her chair back with more violence than grace, rises. Hattie's dark face is hard and cold. She has a disconcerting smile—a little contempt and a great deal of distrust. Her body is short and spreads freely in every direction. Her dark dress is covered by an apron which makes her look somewhat clumsy. Charley, dressed in an overcoat and hat of the latest mode bursts noisily into the room. He is a slender fellow, about the same complexion of his mother, but possessing none of her strength of character. His good-looking face is weak, with a suggestion of stubbornness about it. His manner is arrogant and somewhat insolent.

CHARLEY: Ah'm off, Ma.

HATTIE: So Ah see.

CHARLEY: (His glance falls on the table) Say, Ma—Gee whiz! Ain't Dad bin home fer supper yet?

HATTIE: (Shortly) No.

CHARLEY: (With a low whistle) Dat's funny, he ain't never stayed out befo' has he?

HATTIE: Not sence Ah married him —'cept—

CHARLEY: (Curiously) 'Cept whut, Ma?

HATTIE: 'Cept wunce 'fo yuh was born.

CHARLEY: (With an uproarous laugh) 'An' the old man ain't tried it sence! Reckon yuh fixed him, didn't yuh, Ma! (He sits down beside the table and laughs once more.)

HATTIE: (Sharply) Ah ain't trained yuh half's as well's Ah's trained yo' Dad. (She resumes her seat) Ah shoulda made yuh stay in school fer one thing.

CHARLEY: Yuh had mo' sense Ma! If yuh'd a bossed me lak yuh's bossed Dad, Ah'd runned away long 'fo now.

HATTIE: Thar ain't no danger uh Dan runnin' off. He ain't got de nerve. Sides, nobuddy'd want him.

CHARLEY: Now doan' fool yuhself, Ma! An easy simp lak Dad'd be snapped up soon 'nuff ef he ever got it intuh his head dat he could do sech a thing.

HATTIE: Dan's a fool, but he knows which side his bread's buttered on.

CHARLEY: (Giving his thigh a loud slap) Holy smoke!

HATTIE: (Irritably) Whut's eatin' yuh?

CHARLEY: Nuthin'.

HATTIE: (Impatiently) Never mind lyin'! Whut's on yuh mind?

CHARLEY: Oh, nuthin'! Ah jes' thought er sumpth'n dat's all. Say, Ma—

HATTIE: Well?

CHARLEY: Ah gotta have five bucks ter-night,—Need 'em bad.

HATTIE: It doan do no harm tuh need 'em. Thar's a plenty things Ah's wanted dat Ah ain't never got.

CHARLEY: (Roughly) Where the devil do yuh think Ah kin git it, ef Ah doan ask yuh?

HATTIE: Yuh might wuk 'cassionally. Dan ain't bin home a day dese twenty-five years.

CHARLEY: (With a sneer) An' yuh's jes' done callin' him a fool, ain't yuh? The guys in mah crowd doan do no work see? We lives by our brains.

HATTIE: Not by exercisin' 'em, Lawd knows!

CHARLEY: How come yuh think we hits de Number ev'y week? Brain work!

HATTIE: Ef yuh hits so often whut yuh allus comin' ter me 'bout money fer?

CHARLEY: Ef dat ain't lak a woman! It takes money ter make money!

HATTIE: Charley, yuh's gotta cut out dis gamblin'. Ah ain't goin' give yuh no mo' money.

CHARLEY: (Insolently) Yuh think Ah'm Dad, doan' yuh? Well, Ah ain't! Ah wish ter Gawd Ah knew whut yuh's got over on him. No free man would er stood yuh naggin' all dese years.

HATTIE: (Coldly) Dem whut can't stan' fer mah ways knows whut dey kin do.

CHARLEY: Wouldn't 'sprise me none ef Dad has walked off—

HATTIE: (Quickly) Whut makes yuh think so?

CHARLEY: Reckon yu'd like tuh know, wouldn't yuh?

HATTIE: 'Tain't likely whut yuh could say's wurth five dollars tuh hear.

CHARLEY: Whut Ah seen wouldn't uh bin wuth nuthin' las' week, but sence Dad ain't showed up, fer supper, it's wuth a damn sight mo'. Yuh'd never guess whut Ah seen him doin' one night las' week up on Lenox Avenue.

HATTIE: Well, yuh might's well say it. Yuh kin have dat five, but lemme tell yuh dat yuh'll be de loser, later, if yuh's lied tuh me.

CHARLEY: Whut Ah's gotta lie fer? (He stretches his hand across the table, palm upturned.) Hand it over, Ma. (Hattie takes a bill, from her stocking and puts it on the table, beside her. She places her closed fist upon the money. Charley frowns and back.)

HATTIE: Ah ain't never refused tuh pay fer whut Ah gits.

CHARLEY: Oh, all right. Here goes. Me an' Nat Walker was strollin' up Lenox Avenue one night las' week 'bout half past six. Right ahead uh me Ah seen Dad. He was walkin' 'long, slow ez usual wid his head bent, not seein' nobuddy. All uv a sudden, a woman comin' down de Avenue, went up tuh him an' stops him. He looked up kinda dazed like an' stared at her lak he'd seen a ghost. She jes' shook him by de arm an' laughed. By dat time, we come along side an' Ah got a good look at her. She warn't young an' she warn't old. But she looked—well—As jes' doan know how she did look—all laughin' an' happy an' tears in her eyes. Ah didn' look at her much fer starin' at Dad. He looked—all shaken up—an' scared like—Not scared like neither fer Ah seen him smile at her, after a minute. He ain't never smiled lak that befo'—not's Ah kin remember. Nat said —"Reckin yuh Dad's met an' ole gal 'er his"—But Ah only laughed—Struck me kinda funny—that! Dad meetin' an 'ole flame uh his—Ah meant tuh ask Dad 'bout her but it went clean outa mah head. (He reaches once more for the money. This time he takes it easily, enough. Hattie has forgotten it.)

HATTIE: (After a pause) Was she tall?

CHARLEY: Kinda. Plenty taller'n you. (He rises and takes his hat from the table.)

HATTIE: (After a pause) Light?

CHARLEY: So—So,—lighter'n you. (He moves toward the door.)

HATTIE: Pretty?

CHARLEY: Mebbe. She warn't no chicken—but she was good tuh look at. Tain't no use mopin', Ma. Dad ain't de fus' husban' tuh take dinner wid his girl friend. Funny, though his never doin' it befo'. Well, s'long! (He goes out and the door slams noisily. Hattie rouses up at that and starts clearing the table. She has just left the room with the last handful of dishes when the hall door is opened quietly and Dan enters. He is a dark man of medium height, slender of build. He looks a little stooped. There is a beaten look about his face—a tired, patient look. He takes off his overcoat and still stands there hesitating. Hattie re-enters, frowns darkly but does not speak. She places a scarf upon the table and a little silver-plated basket from the sideboard.)

DAN: (Dropping his coat and hat upon a chair) Sorry, Ah'm late, Hattie. (She does not answer) Ah ain't had no supper. Reckon Ah'll get it an' eat in de kitchen.

HATTIE: (Icily) Reckon yuh'll hang dat coat an' hat in de hall whar dey belongs.

DAN: (Apologetically) Sure. Dunno how Ah come tuh ferget. (He goes out with his clothes and returns almost immediately) He looks timidly at Hattie, then passes on toward the kitchen door.)

HATTIE: (Fiercely) Keep outa dat kitchen!

DAN: But Ah'm hungry, Hattie. Ah ain't had nuthin' tuh eat.

HATTIE: Whar yuh bin, dat yur ain't had nuthin 'tuh eat? (Dan doesn't answer) Yuh kain't say, kin yuh?

DAN: Ah went tuh see a friend uh mine.

HATTIE: Half past six ain't callin' hours! (Dan looks unhappily at the floor) Less'n yuh's asked ter dine!

DAN: It was important! Ah had tuh go.

HATTIE: Had tuh go whar? Yuh ain't said whar yuh's bin. (Dan does not answer.) An yuh ain't got no intention uh saying, has yuh? (Dan does not answer. He moves once more toward the kitchen.)

HATTIE: (In a shrill voice) Yuh keep outa thar! Keep outa mah kitchen! Ah kep yuh supper till eight o'clock. Yuh didn' come, an Ah's throwed it out!

DAN: Ah'll fix sumpth'n else. Ah doan want much.

HATTIE: Yuh ain't goin' messin' in mah kitchen! Yuh's hidin' sumpth'n, Dan Peters, and' Ah's gwine fine it out 'fo' long. Yuh ain't gonna trow no dust in mah eyes no second time—not ef Ah knows it!

DAN: All right. Ah doan' want no fuss, Hattie. Ah'll go out an' git sumpth'n.

HATTIE: Yuh kin fix de furnace 'fo' yuh go. Ah's got 'nuff tuh do runnin' a lodgin' house, 'thout fixin' fires day an' night.

DAN: Charley was home. Yuh coulda asked Charley tuh do it.

HATTIE: Charley doan' never fix no furnace. It's yo' job when yuh's home an' Ah ain't got no reason tuh wish it on Charley.

DAN: Ah'll fix it when Ah gits back. Ah'm hungry, now an' Ah's gwine tuh git sumpth'n tuh eat. (He goes out. Hattie listens for the click of the iron gate, then hurries to the window and peers after him. The door is opened softly and a little brown woman sidles in. Her eyes rove constantly always seeking—seeking. Hattie turns around and glares fiercely at her.)

HATTIE: What yuh want?

MRS. WILKES: (Starting slightly at the grimness of the other's voice) Ah declare, Mis' Peters, yuh sho' does look put out! Anything de matter?

HATTIE: (Shortly) Did yuh come down here tuh tell me dat?

MRS. WILKES: (With an uneasy laugh) C'ose not, Mis' Peters! . . . It's pretty cold upstairs. Ah s'pose de fire's goin' ez usual?

HATTIE: Yes.

MRS. WILKES: It's gettin' colder, Ah reckon. (Hattie does not answer.) It's warmer down here. As Ah always tells Mr. Wilkes, gimme a parlor floor an' basement any time. Ef thar's any heat goin' yuh's sure tuh git it—Co'se,

Ah ain't complainin', Mis' Peters—

HATTIE: H'm!

MRS. WILKES: See Mr. Peters got home pretty late tuh-night, didn' he? (Hattie answers only with a venomous glance.) Thar's a man with reg'lar habits. Ah often tells Mr. Wilkes dat Ah wish tuh goodness he was a home lovin' man lak Mr. Peters Well, reckon Ah'll be gwine up again' seein' ez yuh's got comp'ny.

HATTIE: (With a puzzled frown.) Comp'ny?

MRS. WILKES: Thar's a lady tuh see yuh. She's upstairs settin' in de parlor.

HATTIE: Who let her in?

MRS. WILKES: Mr. Wilkes did. He seen her on de stoop. She was jes' gwine tuh ring de bell when Mr. Wilkes come up wid his key. She ask tuh see Mis' Peters an' he tole her tuh set in de parlor. Ef thar's ever a stupid man it sure is mah husban'. 'Stead uh goin' down an tellin' yuh, 'er hollerin' tuh yuh, 'er sendin' her on down, he comes up-stairs an' tells *me* ter go down an' tell yuh. He'd oughta sent her down de basement do' fust place.

HATTIE: Send her down, will yuh? Some fine day, Ah 'spec we'll be cleaned out, ef yuh all's gwine let strangers in de house that 'a way.

MRS. WILKES: (With a little cough.) Thought yuh might want tuh see her in de parlor. Ah reckon she ain't no thief, not judgin' from her looks.

HATTIE: H'h! Whut she look lak?

MRS. WILKES: She's tall—but not too tall.

HATTIE: (Forcing her stiffening lips to move) Light?

MRS. WILKES: Lighter'n yuh an' me—

HATTIE: (With a supreme effort) Pretty?

MRS. WILKES: Well, yuh knows her all right! She ain't never bin here befo' ez Ah knows—but yuh knows her frum de way yuh's 'scribed her. Well, 'slong! Ah'll send her down. (She opens the hall door) B'r! (She shivers) Dis hall cert'nly is cold! (The door closes after her. For a moment Hattie looks bewildered. But only for a moment. With a sudden harsh laugh she rips the apron from about her waist and pushes it quickly into the side-board drawer. She goes up to the mirror over the mantle, but one look at herself is all that she can bear. As she turns sharply away the door opens and Clem enters. In one glance Hattie's burning eyes take in the tall, well-dressed figure. The graying hair, the youthful face. If Clem's glance is less piercing, it is nevertheless, just as comprehensive.)

CLEM: (Softly) It's bin a long time, Hattie. (Hattie opens her lips to speak, but she doesn't. She sits, rather heavily, and continues to stare at Clem) Ah doan' wonder yuh's 'sprised Hattie. (She hesitates and then drawing up a chair facing Hattie, she too, sits.) Ah know yuh's waitin' tuh hear whut brought me . . . It's a long story, Hattie. (At that, Hattie moves impatiently)

HATTIE: Yuh kin start—at de end—

CLEM: At de end?

HATTIE: At de end. Whut yuh come fer? Yuh's come ter git sumpth'n—Is it—Dan?

CLEM: (Leaning back in her chair with a sigh) De same ole Hattie! De years ain't changed yuh, none.

HATTIE: (With a bitter laugh) An' de years ain't changed *you*, none.

CLEM: Yes. Ah reckon they has, Hattie, Ah's suffered a-plenty.

HATTIE: (With a curl of her lip) An' yuh think dat yuh's de only one?

CLEM: Oh no! Ah kin see yuh's not bin over happy, Hattie, an' Ah knows dat Dan ain't bin happy.

HATTIE: Whut reason yuh got ter bring up all dis talk 'bout suff'rin'? Yuh bin seein' Dan agin', ain't yuh?

CLEM: Yes. Ah met him jes' by accident one night las' week.

HATTIE: An' yuh's bin seein' him sence?

CLEM: Yes, ev'y night. Ah's bein' gwine down town ter meet him 'roun six o'clock an' Ah's ride home wid him in de "L".

HATTIE: An' tuh-night yuh had him out tuh dinner. (Hattie's voice has a deadly calm.)

CLEM: No. Tuh-night Ah couldn' go tuh meet him. Ah was called away on business. Ah ain't seen him tuh-night.

HATTIE: Did he know yuh was comin' here?

CLEM: No.

HATTIE: Why'nt yuh tell him, yuh was comin'.

CLEM: He wouldn' 'er let me come.

HATTIE: Well, say whut yuh's come fer, an' go. It ain't easy settin' here an' listenin' tuh yuh talkin' 'bout Dan.

CLEM: (Abruptly) Yuh's almost driv' him crazy. An' yuh said yuh loved him. (Hattie's fingers clench slowly)

HATTIE: Whar'd yuh go to? Whar you bin all dese years?

CLEM: South—Virginia, whar I come frum.

HATTIE: H'm!

CLEM: Ef Ah'd knowed yuh was gwine tuh be unkind tuh him, Ah'd never let him go! Dan ain't knowed a day's happiness sence Ah went away.

HATTIE: He—he tole yuh dat?

CLEM: Yes! Ah kin fergive yuh fer takin' him 'way frum me—an' de way yuh done it—but it ain't easy fergivin' yuh fer makin' him suffer.

HATTIE: An' dat's whut yuh's come here tuh tell me?

CLEM: (Passionately) Dan's dyin' here, right under yo' eyes, an' yo' doan see it. He's dyin' fer kindness—He's dyin' frum hard wuk. He's dyin' frum de want uv love. Ah could allus read him lak a book. He won't talk 'gainst yuh, Hattie, but Ah kin see it all in de way he looks—in de way he looks at me. (Clem dabs at her eyes with her handkerchief)

HATTIE: Go on. (She marvels at her own quietness!)

CLEM: (Accusingly) He's shabby—all uv him—hat an' shoes an coat. Ef he had one suit fer ev'y five dat yuh son has, he'd be pretty well dressed.

HATTIE: (Slowly) Yuh fergit, Charley is Dan's son ez well ez mine.

CLEM: An' yuh's set him 'gainst his dad. He sides with yuh ev'y time, doan' he?

HATTIE: (With a faint sneer) Did yuh read dat too, in de way Dan—looked—at yuh?

CLEM: Ef yuh had a brought Charley up diff'rent yuh mighta held on tuh Dan. 'Stead uh dat, yuh's brought him up tuh look down on him.

HATTIE: (She is breathing heavily, her voice comes thick and choked.) Is yuh tru? (Rises)

CLEM: Yuh doan' need Dan an yo' son doan' need him. Well, sence yuh ain't got no use fer him, Ah's gwine take him frum yuh, Hattie. Now yuh knows why Ah's come. (She rises also and looks down at Hattie, much to the latter's disadvantage.)

HATTIE: (Forcing the words out, as though each one pains her) Funny—how—thoughtful yuh's got sence Ah's las' seen yuh. Yuh come inta mah house twenty years ago as a frien'—an' yuh took Dan when Ah hadn't bin married ter him a year. Yuh didn' give no 'nouncement den 'bout whut yuh was gwine ter do. Yuh jes' took him—an' me expectin' tuh be de mother uv his chile. Gawd! (A deep shudder runs through her body) But now—dat yuh's got mo' stylish—mo' lady-like in yuh ways yuh come tuh tell me ve'y politely, dat yuh's gwine tuh take him agin. Is it mah blessin' yuh's waitin' fer? Yuh doan' need no permission.

CLEM: Yuh, yuh doan' un'erstan'—Yuh never did un'erstan', Hattie.

HATTIE: Mebbe not. Some things is hard tuh un'erstan'.

CLEM: Co'se Dan an' me could go off tergether, 'thout yuh permission Yuh knows dat well 'nuff. It's bein' done ev'y day. But we doan' want ter go lak dat.

HATTIE: Yuh mean Dan doan' want ter go that 'a-way!

CLEM: Yuh's wrong, Hattie. Dan ain't thinkin' 'er nuthin' 'er nobuddy but me. He's fer quittin' an' never sayin' a word tuh yuh but jes' goin' off, me an' him together. But Ah ain't gwine tuh go lak dat. Dis time it's gotta be diff'rent.

HATTIE: Diff'rent—how?

CLEM: Hattie, Ah wants yuh tuh free Dan. Yuh owes it tuh him. He ain't never bin free sence he's knowed yuh. Will yuh free him?

HATTIE: Free him—how?

CLEM: Give him a divo'ce.

HATTIE: A divo'ce—tuh marry you?

CLEM: (Pleadingly) Yes. 'Taint lak yuh loved him Hattie. Ef yuh loved him. Ah couldn' ask yuh. But yuh only holds onta him tru spite—Yuh hates him, mebbe—Yuh treats him lak yuh does.

HATTIE: Yuh knows Ah kain't keep him ef he wants tuh go. Reckon Ah knows it, too. Well, ef he wants tuh go he kin go.

CLEM: (With an exclamation of relief) Thank Gawd! Ah didn' think yuh'd do it, Hattie.

HATTIE: Yuh coulda spared yuhself de trubble comin' here—an jes' gone off. It woulda bin more lak yuh.

CLEM: But—but—how? Yuh'd have ter know 'bout de devo'ce, Hattie.

HATTIE: Devo'ce? Ah ain't said nuthin' 'bout gettin' no devo'ce!

CLEM: But — but —yuh — Ah thought—Whut yuh mean, Hattie?

HATTIE: Yuh didn' need no devo'ce de fust time, did yuh?

CLEM: (Biting her lips to keep back the tears) Dat—Dat was diff'rent.

HATTIE: Ah doan' see it.

CLEM: Well, it was. It's gotta be a divo'ce dis time.

HATTIE: Ah see Dan's morals has improved some sence *you* went away.

CLEM: It ain't Dan whut's holdin' out fer devo'ce—It's—it's me.

HATTIE: (Hattie's laugh has a bitter edge) Den it's yo' morals dat's bin

improvin'—Well, dey could stan' improvin' a-plenty. (The fierce edge returns suddenly to her voice) Yuh's wastin' yo' time an' mine an Dan's! 'Bout lettin' him go—He coulda gone all dese years—Ah warn't holdin' him back! He'd gone too, ef he'd knowed whar to find yuh. Ah knowed ef he ever found yuh, he'd leave me. Well, he didn' find yuh tell now. But long's Ah's got breaf tuh breathe, Ah ain't gwine say "Yes"! 'bout no divo'ce. Ef he kin git one 'thout me, let him git it! Yuh hear me? Now ef yuh's tru, yuh better get outa here. Ah ain't 'sponsibl' fer whut Ah says frum now on!

CLEM: Hattie, 'fore Gawd, yuh's hard!

HATTIE: Ah was soft 'nuff, when yuh fust stepped on me. Ef Ah's hard now, 'tis yo' fault!

CLEM: Hattie—Ah ain't tole yuh de real reason why Ah wants dat di'voce—(A note of despair has crept into her voice)

HATTIE: No? Well, Ah ain't in'trested none.

CLEM: Still Ah wants yuh tuh hear! It's sumpthin' dat Ah ain't tole Dan. (The door is opened quietly and Dan enters. He starts—looks fearfully from Clem to Hattie and then back again to Clem) Come in, Dan. Ah hope yuh doan' mind mah comin' tuh see Hattie. Ah jes' had tuh come.

DAN: (Swallowing painfully) It won' do no good. (Hattie is gazing at him curiously)

CLEM: Mebbe not, but Ah had tuh come.

DAN: Ah'm sorry, Hattie. We—we —(He turns away as if ashamed)

CLEM: Hattie knows ev'ything Dan. Ah's tole her. (Dan turns toward her)

DAN: Clem, whut was yuh sayin' when Ah come on in? Ah heard yuh—

CLEM: (Embarrassed) Ah didn' want tuh tell yuh—lak dis—

DAN: (Gently) We kain't go back now, Clem. Sence we's in de middle we's gotta git tru, somehow.

CLEM: (Turning from him to Hattie) Ah didn' mean tuh beg, 'less'n Ah had tuh—

HATTIE: (Coldly) Yuh doan' have tuh—

CLEM: Ef 'twas only me—but it ain't. It's fer mah Lucy,—Dan's chile (There is a terrible silence) Dan's chile —Ah didn' tell yuh, Hattie, an' Ah didn' tell Dan. Whut woulda bin de use? She's a woman now an' good—an' pretty. She thinks her dad died when she was a baby an' she thinks—she thinks—Ah'm a good woman. She's proud uh me. (As if unconscious of Hattie's presence, Dan grips Clem's hands. They look at each other.)

HATTIE: (As if to herself. She seems to be trying to get it all quite clear) She thinks yuh's a good woman! An' dat's why yuh expects me tuh give Dan a divo'ce.

CLEM: (Eagerly) Yes, Yes! Yuh see, doan' yuh?

HATTIE: Yes, Ah see. Gawd, ef dat ain't funny! She thinks yuh's a good woman. (She laughs loudly,—hysterically) Oh, my Gawd!

DAN: (Sharply) Hattie!

HATTIE: (Ignoring him) Tell me mo'—'bout dis—dis new relation uh Dan's.

CLEM: Ah's wuked hard tuh git her de chances Ah didn' have. She's bin tuh school—she's got an' eddication.

An' now she's goin' tuh git married tuh a fine feller whut'll be able tuh take care uv her. Now yuh see dat Ah kain't jes' go off wid Dan. It's got tuh be proper—a divo'ce an' all. Yuh see, doan' yuh, Hattie?

HATTIE: (Nodding) Mother an' daughter—double weddin'

CLEM: (Anxiously) An yuh'll do it, Hattie? Gawd'll bless yuh, Hattie.

HATTIE: (Derisively) How come *you's* passin' on blessins? Yuh knows a lot, doan' yuh 'bout blessins? Wonder ef yuh knows ez much 'bout curses?

CLEM: Now, Hattie—

HATTIE: (Darkly) Yuh doan know nuthin' much 'bout curses, does yuh? Well, yuh's cursed, Clem Jackson! Cursed! Yuh's allus bin cursed sence de day yuh cast yuh eyes on Dan!

DAN: (Harshly) Hattie, yuh ain't got no call tuh go on lak dat.

HATTIE: (Who does not seem to hear him) Dan was cursed when he set eyes on yuh. An' Ah was cursed when Ah took yuh fer a frien'.

CLEM: (Hurriedly) Ah'm goin', Hattie! Ah see yuh ain't gwine give in.

HATTIE: Whut's yuh hurry? Yuh better hear whut Ah's gwine tuh say Curses. Yes, we's all bin cursed, Clem. Mah Charley's cursed an' yo' Lucy—too bad.

CLEM: (Angrily) Doan' yuh call mah Lucy's name 'long uv ours.

HATTIE: (With a sneer) Too bad. Wonder how she'll feel when she hears whut a good woman yuh is?

CLEM: (Shrinking as if from a blow) Whut? Yuh—yuh wouldn'—yuh wouldn'—

HATTIE: Wouldn'—wouldn'—(She laughs again—crazily) Sure, Ah'll fine her! Ef it takes de rest uh mah life, Ah'll fine her. It's too good—tuh keep. How she'll stare when she knows her ma was a prostitute an' her dad—

DAN: (Hoarsely) Damn yuh, Hattie! Doan yuh say no mo'.

HATTIE: Ah'll tell her all—all—leavin' out nuthin'.

CLEM: (Pleading as if for life) Yuh couldn', Hattie! Yuh couldn'! Hattie—Hattie—

HATTIE: How she play me false—when Ah trusted her—an' how she lie tuh me—How she ruin' mah life—an' come on back tuh take de leavin's once more—

DAN: Doan yuh say no mo, Hattie!

HATTIE: Yuh'd shut mah mouf' wouldn' yuh? How? How—

DAN: Let's go, Clem. Let's go—

HATTIE: (Shrilly) G'wan. Is Ah keepin' yuh? Take yuh street walker back whar she come frum. Yuh kin give Lucy mah regahds. Tell her dat a frien's gwine call on her—real soon—an' ole frien' uv her ma's.

DAN: (With a cry of rage, grips Hattie by the shoulder and shakes her) Yoh'll shut yo' mouf, Hattie. Promise, 'er fo' Gawd-A-Mighty.

HATTIE: (Scornfully) How yuh's thinkin' 'er shuttin' mah mouf, Dan Peters?

DAN: Yuh'll keep 'way frum Lucy. Yuh'll promise not tuh say nuthin' 'bout Clem. (Dan shakes her again roughly)

HATTIE: (Her speech broken with little gasping cries) Never! An' yuh kain't make me! Ah'll tell her 'bout dis good woman! Dis thief! Dis dirty minded whore! (Without a word, Dan grips her by the throat and forces her back—back against the table. Her arms claw awkwardly and then drop to her

sides. Clem utters a low cry and springs upon Dan, tearing wildly at his fingers.)

CLEM: Dan! Leggo! Leggo, fer Gawd's sake! Dan! (With a violent movement of disgust he thrusts Hattie from him. She falls heavily from the chair, her head striking the marble base of the mantle—an ugly sound. She lies very still. Dan looks at her stupidly. Clem throws her arms about his neck, sobbing hysterically) Dan! Dan! Yuh come near killin' her!

DAN: (Breathing heavily) Ah'd a done it too, ef yuh hadn't bin thar.

CLEM: (Stooping over Hattie) She hit her head an awful crack!

DAN: Hattie's head's harder'n mos'. Come on, Clem. We kain't stay here, now. She'll be comin' to, 'fo' long! An raisin' de roof.

CLEM: (Who is still peerin at Hattie) Dan, thar's blood comin' out de corner uv her mouf.

DAN: She'll be waggin' it again' fo' yuh knows it.

CLEM: (Going up to Dan and putting her hand on his shoulder) Dan, Ah wish yuh hadn't done it! 'Twon' do no good!

DAN: Ah couldn' stan' it no longer. Ah clean los' mah head when she call yuh—whut she did.

CLEM: Yes, Ah know. Poor Danny boy! Ah doan see how yuh's stood it all dese years.

DAN: (Putting his arms about her) Ah was allus thinkin' uv yuh, Clem. Yuh shouldn' 'a lef' me behin'. Yuh'd oughta tole me whar tuh fine yuh. Yuh shoulda tole me 'bout Lucy.

CLEM: Yes, Ah see dat now. But yuh b'longed tuh Hattie 'n Ah thought—

DAN: Ah never b'longed tuh Hattie. (He kisses her) Let's go, Clem (She draws away from him) Why, whut's wrong?

CLEM: Ah's gotta think uh Lucy.

DAN: Lucy?

CLEM: Yes, Lucy. She's yo' chile Dan, an' she doan' know—'bout us.

DAN: An' me—Whut 'bout me, an you—Clem—Clem—

CLEM: Ah you musn'. Then thar's Hattie. Yuh's gotta think uv Hattie—(They both turn and look at the figure huddled there on the floor) Dan, we'd better try'n bring her to. Get some water, Dan.

DAN: Ah won' touch her!

CLEM: It ain't human leavin' her lak dat. Help me lif' her, Dan. She'll catch her death uh cold on dat flo'! (Very unwillingly Dan assists. Together he and Clem get Hattie into a chair. Her head lolls persistently to one side. Clem rubs her hands) Lak ice! Why, Dan, her fingers all stiff! An'—an' Dan! Feel her pulse! Dan! (She draws back terrified. Hattie's body, unsupported, sags awkwardly against the table. Dan quickly seizes her hands, feeling her pulse. He tilts her head backward, looks into her face—feels her heart, then straightens up—his face distorted, his eyes blank.)

CLEM: (In a whisper) Dan—she ain't—dead?

DAN: Dead. (He looks down at his hands in horror)

CLEM: (Wildly) Dan! Whut'll we do! Whut'll we do!

DAN: Yuh'll go back tuh Lucy. She needs yuh.

CLEM: You needs me mo', Dan!

DAN: Yuh kain't help none! Ah doan stan' no chance—reckon Ah owes it tuh Lucy tuh send yuh back tuh her.

Ah ain't never had de chance tuh do nuthin' fer her—but dis.

CLEM: Ah kain't go, Dan! Doan' mek me. (Her body is wracked with sobs.)

DAN: (Taking her in his arms and kissing her) We's gotta think 'bout Lucy—We's brung each other bad luck, Clem. Hattie was right.

CLEM: But Ah loved yuh Dan, an' yuh loved me.

DAN: Ah ain't never loved nobuddy else.

CLEM: Whut'll dey do tuh yuh Dan? Dey won't kill yuh? (She clings tightly to him.) Will dey, Dan?

DAN: Co'se not, Honey! Reckon Ah'll git twenty—er fifteen years—mebbe ten—(He buttons her coat and draws her firmly toward the door.)

CLEM: Ten years! (She wrings her hands with a low moaning cry.)

DAN: Ah'll spend 'em all dreamin' 'bout yuh, Clem, an'—an' Lucy! Yuh musn' grieve, Honey. Go, now, fer Gawd's sake! Ah hears sombuddy comin' down! (He pushes her out, forcibly. And then the door is shut. The outer door slams. Dan listens for the click of the gate. Finally he turns and looks down at Hattie.) Ah'm sorry, Hattie! 'Fore Gawd, Ah didn' mean tuh do it!

CURTAIN

My Epitaph

I am no better than the birds that sing,
So when I die do not bring me flowers.
Dig no grave, erect no monument;
But lay me high upon a lonely hill
As close as possible to God's window sill called heaven.
Let birds of prey come feed upon my body,
And when my bones of flesh are empty quite
Let them remain 'til time has played its part.
The sun and wind and rain and time alas—
Shall dwindle them to nothing but white dust.
Then let this dust commingle with the hill,
And drift downward into some hungry stream;
There to be lost forever to men's sight.
I need no grave. I need no monument.
Let me but be remembered thru my song!

LEWIS ALEXANDER

The Idle Head

A Negro Play in One Act

By Willis Richardson

CHARACTERS

MRS. BROADUS, a washerwoman
GEORGE BROADUS, her son
ALICE BROADUS, her daughter
BRO. HARRIS
A CHAUFFEUR
A POLICEMAN

The scene is the sitting room in the Broadus home. In the center of the rear wall is a fireplace below a mantel, and on the mantel are a clock and two vases. At the right of the fireplace is a low rocker in which George Broadus is lying back with his hat drawn over his eyes. At the left of the fire place in the rear wall is a window. At the left side a door leads to the kitchen and at the right side there are two doors, the one below leading to the hall and the one above leading to the other rooms. Between these doors is a table against the wall and upon the table a large Bible. There are three straight chairs in the room and a few faded pictures about the walls. George Broadus is a young man about eight and twenty, a little above medium height and very robust. He is wearing worn out clothes and no collar. He leans back in the chair asleep until Mrs. Broadus enters from the kitchen. She is a woman of fifty with mixed gray hair, and the facial expression of one who looks forward to nothing but the next day's work. She is wearing a calico dress and gingham apron, and it seems as if she has just left the wash tub. She stops and looks at George a moment and shakes her head before speaking.

Mrs. Broadus: George! George!

George: (Sitting up.) Ma'am?

Mrs. Broadus: What you doin' sleep this time o' day? You'll sleep your brains out, boy.

George: There ain't much else to do.

Mrs. Broadus: Ain't you goin' to look for a job no more?

George: (Carelessly.) What's the use? Everything's against me.

Mrs. Broadus: You don't never expect to find one if you don't look for it, do you?

George: What's the use o' lookin'? Everywhere Ah go they ask me where Ah worked last, and time Ah tell 'em they telephone to find out about me,

and soon as they find out Ah don't get the job. Ah'm on the black list, that's all. And Ah've got sense enough to know Ah won't get nothin' to do as long as Ah stay in this town.

MRS. BROADUS: Well, Ah don't want you to leave town, Ah tell you right now.

(Alice, a young woman of five and twenty has entered the room from the kitchen.)

ALICE: George is right, Ma. He never will get another job in this town. All the boys say he ought to been gone long ago.

MRS. BROADUS: He won't go long as Ah've got anything to say about it.

ALICE: Why? What you want to hang to him so hard for?

MRS. BROADUS: Cause Ah want a man in the house. A house ain't nothin' without a man in it. We wouldn't have no protection if it wasn't for George. Ah wouldn't live in no house if it didn't have a man in it.

ALICE: Ah don't see a thing in that.

GEORGE: (To Alice.) You seem mighty anxious to get me away, but you ain't half as anxious to get me away as Ah am to go. Ah want to go where Ah can work.

ALICE: Ah don't blame you.

MRS. BROADUS: You can work. Ah got a job for you right now. Go and get Mrs. Ross' clothes.

GEORGE: Ah'll go, but Ah don't care much about goin' to that house. That ain't the kind of work Ah mean.

MRS. BROADUS: If you'll do like Ah tell you you'll get along all right.

GEORGE: What is it you want me to do to get along all right?

MRS. BROADUS: When you go there be sure to take your hat off and go in the back way. And don't look so mad all the time.

GEORGE: You mean for me to grin, but Ah don't grin.

MRS. BROADUS: It might pay you if you did.

GEORGE: Then Ah'll never get paid if grinnin's goin' to pay me.

MRS. BROADUS: They been complainin' about you comin' in the front way all the time.

GEORGE: Who's been complainin'?

MRS. BROADUS: The chauffeur said Mrs. Ross didn't like it.

GEORGE: Aw, damn the chauffeur!

MRS. BROADUS: Don't use that kind o' language in here!

GEORGE: Ah'll fix him some o' these days.

MRS. BROADUS: (Becoming anxious.) Don't you go out o' here and get in no trouble, George.

GEORGE: Ah ain't goin' out lookin' for trouble, but some o' these days he's goin' to catch me wrong. Seems like somebody's always tryin' to do somethin' to make me disagreeable. If it ain't him it's Alice, and if it ain't Alice it's somebody else.

ALICE: What did Ah do?

GEORGE: You been searchin' ma pockets. You better keep out o' ma pockets if you don't want to have trouble.

ALICE: Who's been in your pockets?

GEORGE: You! You know you been in 'em!

ALICE: Ah don't want nothin' you've got.

GEORGE: Ah know you don't. That's because Ah ain't got nothin'. But just the same you take a fool's advice and keep out o' ma pockets.

Mrs. Broadus: Go on, George, and stop your quarrellin'.

George: You better make her keep out o' ma pockets. (Pulling his hat tightly on his head he goes out.)

Mrs. Broadus: That's right, Alice, you keep out o' his pockets; it might cause trouble. Yo know George's got a mighty mean temper when he gets mad, and you can't tell what he might do.

Alice: (Defiantly.) Ah know he's got better sense than to lay his hands on me. He ain't gone crazy yet.

Mrs. Broadus: No, he ain't goin' to lay his hands on you. George wouldn't hit no woman, but he'd raise such a rumpus in the house that all the neighbors ud think he was beatin' us both to death.

Alice: Who cares about him? Ah ain't scared of him.

Mrs. Broadus: Ah know you ain't; but just keep out o' his pockets and we won't have trouble. You know a lot o' men think it's the worse thing in the world to have a wōman searchin' their pockets. (There is a knock on the door.) Open the door and see who it is.

(Alice opens the door and Bro. Harris enters. He is a tall servile looking man with side whiskers.)

Bro. Harris: (Bowing.) Good mornin', sisters.

Mrs. Broadus and Alice: Good mornin', Brother Harris.

Bro. Harris: How you sisters this mornin'?

Alice: Ah'm well.

Mrs. Broadus: Ah ain't much, Brother Harris; how you do?

Bro. Harris: Ah'm well, thanks the Lord.

Alice: Have a seat.

Bro. Harris: (Drawing a memorandum from his pocket.) Ah ain't got that much time. Ah got to be gettin' along. Ah see you sisters wasn't to church last Sunday, and you wasn't to class meetin' last night. You ain't turnin' backsliders, is you?

Alice: No, seh.

Mrs. Broadus: Ah tell you, Brother Harris, Ah wasn't feelin' so good Sunday, and the reason Ah didn't come to class meetin' last night, Ah didn't have ma dues.

Bro. Harris: That's just what Ah'm here to see about. Ah'm collectin' class dues and rally money for the church. You all owe five dollars together on your class, and Ah got you down here for two apiece on this rally. That makes nine dollars.

Mrs. Broadus: Nine dollars and we ain't got a cent.

Bro. Harris: Workin' every day and ain't got a cent?

Mrs. Broadus: It takes everything we can make to get somethin' to eat and keep a roof over our heads.

Bro. Harris: Well, you know this church money's got to be paid. The church can't go on if the members don't pay.

Mrs. Broadus: But we ain't been able to spare the money.

Bro. Harris: You ought to lay aside a little at a time.

Mrs. Broadus: People's got to eat, and wear clothes, and live in houses, Brother Harris.

Bro. Harris: Ah know that, but you all don't manage right.

Mrs. Broadus: We do the best we can.

Bro. Harris: No you don't; you don't do the best you can.

MRS. BROADUS: How you mean?

BRO. HARRIS: There's that boy o' yours ain't struck a lick o' work in six months.

MRS. BROADUS: It ain't his fault.

BRO. HARRIS: Whose fault is it?

MRS. BROADUS: Ah don't know whose fault it is, but Ah know it ain't his'n. He's been tryin' to get work, but everything's against him.

BRO. HARRIS: Don't you believe it. Anybody can get a job that wants one.

MRS. BROADUS: He tries and tries, but everywhere he goes they turn him away.

BRO. HARRIS: Everybody wouldn't turn him away.

MRS. BROADUS: That's what he says, and Ah don't believe he'd lie about it.

BRO. HARRIS: Ah can't see how it can be true.

MRS. BROADUS: It's a mighty funny thing, but it is true.

BRO. HARRIS: And you takin' his word for it?

MRS. BROADUS: Ah would take his word; but he ain't the only one that's told me. Men what's worked places where he went has told me the same thing.

BRO. HARRIS: How did he get down and out like that?

MRS. BROADUS: Ah reckon George is too firey. He won't stand for nothin'.

BRO. HARRIS: He ought'n to be too firey. He won't get nothin' like that.

MRS. BROADUS: He comes by it honest, he gets it from his daddy.

BRO. HARRIS: Well, if he ever 'spects to get along he'll have to change his ways.

MRS. BROADUS: He can't change his ways, he was born like that.

BRO. HARRIS: And another thing, Ah wouldn't be takin' his word so much; if you keep on like you goin' you never will have nothin'.

MRS. BROADUS: You don't know George like Ah do. He don't belong to church, but he wouldn't lie to me for nothin'. The most of the things Ah'm tellin' you was told to me by other people.

BRO. HARRIS: What did he do to make 'em put him on the black list?

MRS. BROADUS: Well, Ah'll tell you what they told me and what he said too: The last job he got was a waiters job; and you know George never was used to that kind o' work; he was always mighty independent. He gets that from his daddy too. Ma husband never did work for nobody but hisself.

BRO. HARRIS: Ah know he didn't.

MRS. BROADUS: So this last job George got was at a club. He was comin' by with a tray and a young smart alec throwed a quarter to him and says: "Here, Sambo, here's a tip for you." George didn't make no move to catch the quarter. He just let it hit him and roll on the floor; and then he stood there lookin' that young feller straight in the eyes for a whole minute before he bawls him out. Then George says to him: "Ah ain't workin' for you and ma name ain't Sambo. Ah'm workin' for this club and they pay me by the month for ma work. Ah don't want tips from nobody that calls me Sambo." Some other men told me that was right there and seen it. They said the young feller turned red as a beet. So that night George was fired.

Bro. Harris: And he ain't had a job since, is he?

Mrs. Broadus: No, seh.

Bro. Harris: He was a fool for actin' like that.

Mrs. Broadus: Maybe he was and maybe he wasn't. Ah know he never would take nothin' off nobody, and Ah don't blame him.

Bro. Harris: Ah don't mean to try to get into your family affairs, Sister Broadus; Ah was just givin' you a little advice about how you might get along better. Course Ah wouldn't like to take this roll of honor in without you all's names on it, so Ah'm goin' down the street to collect some more money, and on ma way back Ah'll drop in to see if you changed your mind. (Going to the door.) You know we can't have people stayin' on the class if they can't pay the dues.

Mrs. Broadus: Ah'm sorry, Brother Harris, but Ah don't see how we can do a thing today.

Bro. Harris: Ah'm comin' back by and look you over anyhow. You all might change your minds. (He goes out.)

Mrs. Broadus: This is the worst pickle we ever been in, Alice.

Alice: Ah reckon it is, Ma. What we goin' to do?

Mrs. Broadus: God knows Ah don't know what we goin' to do.

Alice: We got to do somethin'. If we don't do somethin' they'll put us out o' church. And then we'll be the talk of the town.

Mrs. Broadus: (Her eyes filled with tears.) There ain't nothin' to do but pray.

Alice: But there ain't no use o' cryin', Ma; cryin' won't do no good.

(The door is pushed open and George enters with a basket of clothes.)

George: Ah just seen your class leader goin' down the street? What did he want, money?

Mrs. Broadus: Yes.

George: He always wants money. He never comes around if it ain't for that. It's the same way with all of 'em.

Mrs. Broadus: Don't be so bitter, George.

George: Ah ain't bitter, Ah'm tellin' the truth. (He notices her eyes.) What you been doin', cryin'?

Alice: Brother Harris said somethin' about puttin' us off the class if we didn't pay our dues, and Ma don't want the whole town talkin' about her.

George: How much do you owe?

Alice: Nine dollars.

George: Nine dollars! Helpin' to get a new suit for the preacher? Suits must be gone up.

Alice: Ah reckon you're right. (She goes out.)

Mrs. Broadus: You all ought'nt to talk like that.

George: He'll be waitin' a long time before he gets it. Even at that Ah know you ought to have the money to give him. And when Ah say that Ah ain't thinkin' so much about him as Ah am about you—you and Alice. You all been doin' things for me all ma life and now it's almost time for me to be doin' somethin' for you all—somethin' you want done.

Mrs. Broadus: That's all right, Ah know you'd do it if you could.

George: Ah'm goin' to do somethin' too. There ain't nothin' Ah wouldn't do for you all, cause Ah don't care half

as much about all the rest of the world as Ah do about you two.

MRS. BROADUS: Don't keep that on your mind. Did you do what Ah told you when you went after them clothes?

GEORGE: What you mean?

MRS. BROADUS: You didn't have no trouble with that chauffeur, did you?

GEORGE: Ah went in the front way, but Ah didn't see him.

MRS. BROADUS: But you mustn't go in the front way, George. Them people don't like it.

GEORGE: It ain't nobody but him.

MRS. BROADUS: The madam don't like it neither. She don't say nothin' but Ah know she don't like it. (George is silent.) Ah hopes you don't make me lose this wash, George; it's the best one Ah got.

GEORGE: That chauffeur'll lose somethin' if he keeps on after me.

MRS. BROADUS: If you get in trouble and go to jail, you needn't expect me to get you out.

GEORGE: Ah reckon Ah'd be just as well off in jail, then you and Alice wouldn't have nobody to work for but yourselves.

MRS. BROADUS: Go on, George, and don't talk so foolish. Look through them clothes and see if you see any valuables. She's always leavin' somethin' in her clothes.

GEORGE: All right. Now don't go out there and do a lot o' worryin' about that church money. Let it go.

MRS. BROADUS: Ah can't help it, George. It works on ma mind. Ma name's been on that roll of honor for the last twenty years.

GEORGE: And if Ah wasn't such a burden on you all it ud be on there now.

MRS. BROADUS: Oh, stop your foolishness and look through them clothes.

(She goes out. He sits staring at the fire for a moment, then takes a knife from his pocket, picks up a stick and begins to whittle it. After a few moments he throws the stick into the fire and spits in after it. He then brings the basket over and begins looking through the clothes. He finds a gold bar pin sticking in a waist, and looking at it closely he puts it upon the mantel and continues to look through the clothes. Finally he comes across a diamond pin. He looks at this carefully, ponders over it then puts it into his pocket. After putting the other clothes back into the basket he takes both pins and examines them more closely. At last after coming to some conclusion he puts the bar pin back upon the mantel and the diamond into his pocket.)

GEORGE: (Calling.) Ma!

MRS. BROADUS: (From the kitchen.) What?

GEORGE: Ah found a pin.

MRS. BROADUS: (Appearing.) Where is it?

GEORGE: (Rising and stretching.) On the mantel. (Mrs. Broadus takes the pin and looks at it. George starts out.)

MRS. BROADUS: (Putting the pin down.) Where you goin'?

GEORGE: Ah'm goin' out to see if Ah can scrape up enough for you all's church money.

MRS. BROADUS: How you goin' to to scrape up nine dollars?

GEORGE: Ah don't know.

MRS. BROADUS: Be careful. You know what they say about the idle head bein' the devil's workshop.

GEORGE: Ah ain't goin' to do nothin' to nobody. (He goes out.)

MRS. BROADUS: (Calling.) Alice!

ALICE: Ma'am?

MRS. BROADUS: Come here. (Alice enters wiping water from her hands with her apron.) George found one pin in the clothes.

ALICE: Ah wonder what she wants to leave things in her clothes for?

MRS. BROADUS: She's mighty careless.

ALICE: After a while she'll be losin' somethin' and sayin' she left it in her clothes.

MRS. BROADUS: Ah hope not. Ah wouldn't want to be accused o' stealin'.

ALICE: Did George look through 'em good?

MRS. BROADUS: Ah reckon he did.

ALIDE: Let's look again. (There is a knock on the door.)

MRS. BROADUS: Come in! (The door is pushed open and the chauffeur enters.)

CHAUFFEUR: Good mornin',

MRS. BROADUS AND ALICE: Good mornin'.

CHAUFFEUR: Mrs. Ross sent me to ask you all to look through the clothes and see if you could find two pins she had left in 'em.

MRS. BROADUS: Ma son just looked through 'em. (Taking the pin from the mantel.) Here's one pin he found.

CHAUFFEUR: She said there was two pins, this one and a diamond.

ALICE: We ain't seen no diamond. That's the only pin was in there.

CHAUFFEUR: Did you all look through the clothes good?

MRS. BROADUS: Ma son did.

CHAUFFEUR: Where's he?

MRS. BROADUS: He's gone out.

CHAUFFEUR: Well, Mrs. Ross ain't so much bothered about this pin; it was the other one she was worried about. She said it cost five hundred dollars.

ALICE: Five hundred dollars!

CHAUFFEUR: (Hoping to add to his own importance.) That ain't nothin', Ah've worked for people that owned pins worth a thousand.

MRS. BROADUS: We ain't seen nothin' of it.

CHAUFFEUR: Ah'll go back and tell her what you said. You don't know where your son's gone, do you?

MRS. BROADUS: (Becoming angry.) Look a here, mister; ma son ain't got nothin' to do with no pin. He ain't seen no pin.

CHAUFFEUR: Ah didn't say your son had it; but if it ain't found somebody's goin' to have trouble.

MRS. BROADUS: You just as well get your mind off ma boy, cause he's just as honest as the days is long.

CHAUFFEUR: All right, we'll see about it. (He goes out closing the door behind him.)

ALICE: There! What did Ah tell you. They're ready to blame that on us right now.

MRS. BROADUS: They sha'n't lay it on us.

ALICE: How you goin' to stop 'em?

MRS. BROADUS: Ah don't know; but Ah know Ah ain't goin' to stand for no pin.

ALICE: Ah reckon we better look through them clothes again; maybe George did miss it. (They begin to search the clothes.)

MRS. BROADUS: Ah'd rather find it in here than to have her thinkin' we stole it.

ALICE: Ah would too. Ah told you they'd be wantin' to blame us.

MRS. BROADUS: They ain't blamed us yet.

ALICE: They ain't far from it. Couldn't you tell by the way he talked that he had his mind on George?

MRS. BROADUS: (Looking anxiously at each piece as she takes it out.) Ah don't know. Ah don't know. Look careful, gal. (George enters.)

GEORGE: Didn't Ah look through them clothes good enough?

MRS. BROADUS: The Chauffeur's been here and says Mrs. Ross left a diamond pin in these clothes.

GEORGE: (Calmly taking off his coat.) He must be crazy.

ALICE: (As they finish searching.) Ah don't see nothin'.

MRS. BROADUS: Me neither.

(George hangs his coat on the back of the chair and sits.

GEORGE: Don't worry, Ma. Let her find it where she lost it. Ah bet she'll come across it sooner or later.

MRS. BROADUS: Ah don't like for nobody to lose nothin' around me. Ah reckon you're right just the same.

GEORGE: Let her do the worryin'. (Mrs. Broadus sits and gazes sadly into the fire place.)

GEORGE: (Breaking the silence.) Ah did run across some money while Ah was out.

MRS. BROADUS: Money?

ALICE: Where?

GEORGE: Ah borrowed some for you all's church dues.

MRS. BROADUS: Who's goin' to lend you nine dollars?

GEORGE: Don't you think Ah've got some friends?

ALICE: Where is it?

GEORGE: (Handing some bills to each of them.) Here.

MRS. BROADUS: Ah'm mighty glad to get it. This'll put us on the roll again.

ALICE: Indeed it will.

GEORGE: (Rising.) Ah reckon Ah'll go in and take a nap.

MRS. BROADUS: All right. We'll be ready for Brother Harris when he comes back. (George goes into the next room.)

ALICE: George might be firey, but he's got some good friends somewhere.

MRS. BROADUS: He sure is.

ALICE: Brother Harris'll be kinder surprised, won't he?

MRS. BROADUS: Ah bet Ah can knock him down with a feather when he sees these bills. (Alice begins to search the pockets of George's coat.)

MRS. BROADUS: What you doin'?

ALICE: Ah just want to see what he's got.

MRS. BROADUS: You better stop that. He'll catch you at it some o' these days and there'll be trouble.

ALICE: (Drawing a card from George's pocket.) Look, Ma, a pawn ticket.

MRS. BROADUS: A what?

ALICE: A pawn ticket. (There is a knock on the door.)

MRS. BROADUS: (All smiles.) Ah reckon that's Brother Harris now. Come in!

(The Chauffeur enters, followed by a policeman. Mrs. Broadus is so surprised she cannot speak. Alice quickly puts the ticket behind her.)

CHAUFFEUR: Ah'm back to see about that pin. Did you find it?

MRS. BROADUS: (Frightened.) No, we just got through lookin' in the clothes.

POLICEMAN: And you're sure you ain't seen the pin at all?

MRS. BROADUS: No, seh, Ah ain't seen it. She didn't send it in these clothes.

POLICEMAN: (To the Chauffeur indicating Mrs. Broadus.) Is this the woman that takes in the wash?

CHAUFFEUR: Yes.

POLICEMAN: (To Mrs. Broadus.) Ah wouldn't like to see you in no trouble, so you better tell where the pin is.

MRS. BROADUS: Ah ain't seen no pin, Mister.

CHAUFFEUR: Where's your son?

MRS. BROADUS: (Pointing to the door.) He's in there sleep.

POLICEMAN: (Starting towards the door.) In this room?

MRS. BROADUS: (Stopping him.) Wait a minute, mister; don't go in there! If you don't want to get in trouble, don't go in there!

CHAUFFEUR: We want to see him.

MRS. BROADUS: Ah'll go after him. (She goes into the next room. The policeman looks upon the mantel while the Chauffeur shakes the clothes out of the basket.)

POLICEMAN: (To Alice.) Do you know anything about that pin?

ALICE: No, seh.

CHAUFFEUR: What you got behind you? (Just at this moment Mrs. Broadus enters followed by George. George has been asleep and is looking very unpleasant.)

CHAUFFEUR: (Starting towards Alice.) Let's see what you got behind you.

GEORGE: (Going forward.) If you put your hands on her Ah'll break your neck!

CHAUFFEUR: (Stopping.) What's she got behind her:

GEORGE: That's her business.

CHAUFFEUR: (Pointing to the coat.) Is this your coat?

GEORGE: Yes.

CHAUFFEUR: (To the policeman.) Search it. (The policeman takes the coat, but George snatches it from him.)

GEORGE: No, you don't! You sha'n't search ma clothes! You can't search me without a warrant! You ain't got no business in here nohow!

(He rolls the coat up and puts it under his arm confident that he has the ticket in the pocket.)

CHAUFFEUR: (Pointing to Alice.) Ah believes she's got that pin behind her.

POLICEMAN: What's that behind you?

GEORGE: (Laughing.) Let 'em see what you got, Alice. (Alice makes no move to do so.) Let 'em see so they can get out o' here. (Alice still keeps her hand behind her.)

GEORGE: (Still laughing.) Show 'em the pin, Alice.

ALICE: He ain't got nothin' to do with what's in ma hand.

CHAUFFEUR: She's got it in her hand. Ah'll bet on it.

GEORGE: Show 'em what you got in your hand so they can go home and look for the pin.

ALICE: No, Ah won't show 'em nothin'.

GEORGE: (Going towards her.) Stop your foolishness, gal; so they can get out o' here. (He pulls her hand from behind her showing the pawn ticket. George is too surprised to speak.)

CHAUFFEUR: Oh, Ah know where that pin is now.

POLICEMAN: (Taking the ticket.) Who's been to the pawn shop today?

GEORGE: (To Alice.) You fool! Didn't Ah tell you to keep out o' ma pockets?

POLICEMAN: (Putting his hand on George's shoulder.) Ah'll have to take you. You pawned the pin, didn't you?

MRS. BROADUS: Let 'em take me, George; let 'em take me! Ah'm the cause of it! Ah sent you to pawn that pin!

POLICEMIN: (To George.) Did you pawn it, or did she?

GEORGE: (Pulling on his coat.) Ah done it, you fool; can't you see she's ma mother!

MRS. BROADUS: Let 'em take me, George; please let 'em take me! Ah'm old and Ah won't live long nohow! You got a long time to live!

GEORGE: That's all right; you didn't do it. They ain't got no right to take you.

CHAUFFEUR: Let's take 'em both.

GEORGE: (Angrily.) No, you won't take us both, you lackey; you'll take me or none!

POLICEMAN: Come on, then, let's be goin'.

MRS. BROADUS: (Making a last appeal.) Wait a minute, mister; for God's sake, wait a minute! (She takes the money from Alice and putting it with what she has offers it to the policeman.) Here, here's the money! Take it and get the pin out and leave George alone! He didn't mean to steal the pin! He pawned it cause we needed the money! He didn't think about what he was doin'! He's a good boy! He wouldn't steal nothin' from nobody! Honest to God he wouldn't!

POLICEMAN: You'll have to tell that to the judge.

GEORGE: (With a fling at Alice.) If you had kept out o' ma pockets like Ah told you, this wouldn't 've happened!

ALICE: How did Ah know you had pawned the pin?

GEORGE: It wasn't none o' your business! (To the policeman.) Let's go.

(Mrs. Broadus, who has followed them to the door wringing her hands, falls on her knees as the door closes behind them. She kneels there swaying from one side to the other while Alice stands in the center of the floor with her hands hanging limp at her sides and her lips quivering.)

CURTAIN

The Alternative

The joy which held me in that day,
Has played its part and sped away;
And sorrow held such willing arms,
I succumbed to her subtle charms.

LEWIS ALEXANDER

Black Damp

By John F. Matheus

in which appear

BIG STEVE JOHNSON, a Negro miner
"FOOTS" WILLIAMS, a Negro miner
"GOOSY" WOODS, a white American miner
JOE DOMINI, an Italian miner
MIKE, a Polish track man
RAINFORD, American fireboss
DAWSON, police officer
LOPEZ, Spanish motorman
Rescuers

SCENE I

A "room," running off from a long gallery in a present day West Virginia shaft coal mine, two miles from the entrance. In the rear an exit leads into the gallery. A row of wooden props runs the length of the stage at intervals of four feet with supporting beams to hold up the roof of slate and rock. Beyond the exit an electric light is visible above the mine electric railway track running along the gallery. Two spurs from this track branch into the "room," one to the right, the other to the left. On either side two piles of coal are heaped up to be loaded into cars invisible to the audience, but into which the miners are seen to throw the coal. Shovels and picks lie around, and an empty keg of tin marked "Powder." The stage is in semi-darkness.

It is 5:30 A. M. Voices are heard off stage.

Voices. Hello! That you Mike?—Yah, Meester Rainford.—Gittin' thru early ain't yer?—Mebbe. I no stop lasr night. My woman, she seeck, my boy she seeck too.

(Rainford and Mike appear before the entrance. Both wear overalls and miners' caps provided with safety lamps which are burning steadily.)

Rainford. How old's the boy?

Mike. Thr-r-ee year.

Rainford. Well I betcha he's a chip off the old block and that he'll make a better miner than his daddy.

Mike. Naw! I no want heem to work like me, under ground.

Rainford. Oh, I don't know. There's lots o' worse jobs.

Mike. Mebbe? Anyway he find better.

RAINFORD. Everything all right?

MIKE. Fine.

RAINFORD. I noticed a couple o' bad ties about a quarter o' mile from the entrance elevator. Take your gang to-night and have it fixed.

MIKE. Sure thing.

RAINFORD. So long.

MIKE. S'long. (Exit.)

RAINFORD. (Entering the "room" and looking around, examining the roof, supports, sides. The flickering glare from his single lamp sends lurid shadows across the room. At intervals he flashes a spot light from a pocket flash light upon the parts he is examining.) By God, if it ain't pretty tough, but dog gone ut, he ain't got no holler, the hunkey. All he's o fightin' fer. Minin' ain't no white man's job, but not so bad for niggers an' hunkies. (Mechanically pushing posts to test their strength) Humph! Now to git out o' this hell hole afore the gang gits here. (Sound of a bell is heard ringing and the rumble of approaching cars) May as well wait and ketch a ride back. (Begins to whistle indifferently. Off stage the cars are heard coming to a stop. The sound of men's voices comes from a distance.)

VOICES. Hey! Cut it out!—Ha! Ha! (Big Steve and Foots enter carrying between them a keg of powder and fuses which they throw on the floor. Goosy and Joe follow. All have dinner pails, wear overalls and wear miners' safety lamps in their caps.)

VOICE OF LOPEZ. All r-r-right?

FOUR MINERS. (Loudly.) All right.

RAINFORD. Hello, boys.

MINERS. (In concert.) Good mornin'.

RAINFORD. Goin' to shoot some to-day, eh?

JOE. (Pertly.) That's the beesness. We feenish heem (Pointing to piles of coal) to-day, an' then we shoota beega pile, make da mon'. Then—Carlotta an' Joe, sweet. (He waves right hand to lips and throws a kiss in the air.)

RAINFORD. O hell!

GOOSY. Knockin' off, Rainford?

RAINFORD. In a few minutes. What's it doin' up above?

GOOSY. It was rainin' cats and dogs when we came down.

RAINFORD. That's luck fer you, when I had planned to go to town.

BIG STEVE. We all ain't studin' no rain, Mister Rainford.

RAINFORD. (Banteringly.) None o' yer kiddin' now. I ain't feelin' too right an' I wouldn't min' knockin' a coon in the mouth.

BIG STEVE. (Laughing.) Kayah! Kah! Hah!

FOOTS. (Sullenly.) An' ah ain't feelin' so pert mahself. Wouldn't mine bustin' a sager.

GOOSY. O go on, Foots! Can't you take a joke? Cripes! What's ailin' you?

RAINFORD. Well, I ain't takin' back nothin' an' pay day is Saturday.

BIG STEVE. Foots ain't been feelin' right sence las' night in town at the dance. Buck Pope done danced too much with his old lady.

FOOTS. Shet up.

(The men put down their pails. Big Steve yawns and stretches himself. Foots spits on his hands. Joe picks up a shovel and goes thru a pantomime of shoveling. Goosy reaches in his hip pocket and pulls out a plug of black tobacco, biting off a chew.)

RAINFORD. You darkies drink too much red eye an' white mule at them dances. Where do you all git it?

FOOTS. None o' yer damn business.

GOOSY. By the way, Riley was found dead this mornin'. Passed by the crowd on my way to work. He raided that dance las' night, didn't he boys?

RAINFORD. So that's why it's none o' yer damn business? (Silence.) Why don't you shoot off your lip? Go to it.

BIG STEVE. Fo' Gawd! Done found him dead?

VOICE OF LOPEZ. All r-right. (Noise of electric motor is heard.)

RAINFORD. (Moving toward the exit.) Keep a watch on the ventilation. One of the fans wasn't working so well last night. (Exit. The cars are heard rolling away.)

FOOTS. Well work's what we're cravin', so let's git at it.

BIG STEVE. (In deep meditation.) What you know 'bout that?

FOOTS. What?

BIG STEVE. Riley dead.

GOOSY. A man's flirtin' with death, I says, when he takes one o' them Prohibition jobs.

JOE. Proheebeesh poleece (Shaking his head) no good.

FOOTS. Ah' yo' workin' this mornin', Steve or ain't yo'? Let's eat up this pile of coal so's we kin shoot another. I allus likes the sounds of shootin'. Sort a fun. Makes yo' fergit yer troubles.

STEVE. Ah'm with yo', Foots. Almost fergot about Sis. You know (To Goosy and Joe) my sister. (Sheepishly.) She is away in school an' ah got to keep her theah an' in plenty o' money. I couldn't stand her hangin' roun' any of these dance hall shieks. Ah ain't no angel, but I gots some pride an' ambition fo' huh.

FOOTS. Lot a good it'll do. All Janes are alike. She'll come back an' marry one o' em, just the same.

BIG STEVE. How yo' know so much?

FOOTS. Ah means ef she wants to she will. Yo' can't stop 'em. (Bitterly.) Yo' can't stop 'em.

BIG STEVE. Well she won't want to. Heah, lissen to this—jes' one minute. I gots a letter from huh las' night. (He fumbles in his pockets.) I put it in my work clothes to read it agin. (Pulls out letter.) Lemme see. Lemme see. Dog gone, I can't see. (Takes off his cap and by the aid of his safety lamp reads.) "Dear, dear Brother."

FOOTS. Cut it out. What do you do when yo' get off a work.

GOOSY. Let's hear it, Big Steve. I got a girl in school too. My own. Her mother died when she was bo'n. How ol's yer sister?

BIG STEVE. She's about, 'bout, lessee, 'bout eight year younger an' me. She's 'bout eighteen, come July.

GOOSY. My kid's fifteen.

BIG STEVE. (Reading.) "I am learnin' to make cake and all the things you like. I am learning to sew, also. I can make all my own dresses now." (Smiling.) Ain't that fine? That's somethin' great—"My other"—What's that word (Looks hard and peers intently at all sides of paper.) O yes—"My other stu-studies are hard. We have to pay our board bill ond buy some books before we can go on." (Folding up letter hurriedly) Shucks! What's the matter with me? Ah ain't got no time to be a losin', got to git busy 'round heah. That gal's got to go on.

FOOTS. Well git goin'.

JOE. We'll beat yo' loadin'. Bet yo' five cent.

FOOTS. Shet up, white fo'ks an' git a doin'. Talk ain't gittin' yo' nothin'.

GOOSY. (Winking at Joe and pointing his thumb in the direction of Foots.) Gittin' mighty bloody.

JOE. *Si*—thinkin' beeg.

FOOTS. (Disdainfully.) Uh huh!

(Both sides shovel manfully for a few seconds.)

JOE. (Singing.)

Giovanezza!
Giovanezza!
Primavera per Italia!
Mussolini!

GOOSY. What the say, air you goin' crazy?

JOE. Yes—crazy—crazy, likea all Italians, crazy. I wanta sing, to sing to Carlotta. Ah, thay's the end of the Fascisti song. Mussolini—bigga man.

BIG STEVE. (Stopping his work in admiration.) Ah don't know what it means but it sounds mighty good.

FOOTS. Yo' all mek me sick.

BIG STEVE. Go hang crepe on yourself.

FOOTS. Ef yo' knows what good fo' yo', you'd let Carlotta stay over yander amongst them Eyetalians.

JOE. For what you think-a like that?

FOOTS. Say, Joe, what 'ud you do ef somebody would try to butt in atwixt you an' Carlotta?

JOE. *No capisc'*—me no onderstand "butt in."

GOOSY. He means if some other fellow would try to take Carlotta from you for himself.

JOE. Some other fallow! Take Carlotta?

FOOTS. Uh huh. That's what I mean.

JOE. Me keela heem—queeck with one stilletto. In my contree whar I come from in Sicilia, no lika here.

BIG STEVE. Ain't it so!

FOOTS. Jes' what I knowed. You'se all jes' nacherly fools about you'se all women.

JOE. (Excitedly.) But—*bene*—Carlotta—she mine—she no want to go with other fallow. Six month I work—I go back with planty mon', marry Carlotta.

FOOTS. Can't be too sure.

GOOSY. Seems like yo' got a grudge agin somebody, Foots.

FOOTS. Jes' like Big Steve done said ah'm sore. Ah got it in fo' Buck Pope. Ah don't bother nobody. I don't fight no mans what lemme be. But lemme be. Ef yo' don't ah don't keer who yo' is ner what happens. Buck Pope dances with my old lady an' she falls fo' his smooth tongue. Ah gives her all muh money an' treats her right. Am Ah goin' tek it? No, I ain't, an' Ah don't mean any maybe so promise either.

BIG STEVE. You don't know nothin' that's got any sense. 'Spose yo' kill that no count scalawag. What good would it do yo', when the electric cheer'll be burnin' fo' yo' or the pen'll have yo'?

FOOTS. Well he'll not be havin' her—I'll know that.

BIG STEVE. 'Taint worth it. No, 'taint worth it, Ah say. Too many womens in the world.

FOOTS. Ain't but one fo' me.

JOE. Ah, *Si*—oll right—only one!

BIG STEVE. Ah don't know.

FOOTS. Well yo' an' me is two diff'ent persons.

(The noise of approaching cars attracts their attention.)

GOOSY. Here comes some empties.

Remind me of you fellows' heads, makin' a lot of racket an' nothin' in 'em. (They all begin to shovel coal. The cars are heard coming to a stop. The voice of Lopez sounds in the distance.)

VOICE OF LOPEZ. Turn in first door —*a la derecha,* at the right, señor.

JOE. (Whispering.) Some inspector.

GOOSY. Must be a new one.

(Dawson appears in the entrance dressed in blue uniform of a policeman.)

DAWSON. Good morning, boys.

(All look up in surprise.)

ALL IN CHORUS. Good mornin'.

DAWSON. You all know who I am an' you know I mean business. (Turning toward Big Steve.) Are you Steve Jackson?

BIG STEVE. Yes sah.

DAWSON. And you're Bill Williams, known as Foots?

FOOTS. That's me.

DAWSON. (Pulling out warrant from his coat pocket.) You're under arrest.

BIG STEVE. Undah arrest?

FOOTS. Fo' what?

DAWSON. Fo' killin' Prohibition officer Riley last night.

BIG STEVE. Fo' Gawd, Cap'n yo' sho' got the wrong man.

DAWSON. Who said anything about the man. I said *men,* you coons.

FOOTS. (Defiantly.) We all ain't done nothin' to nobody, so go'long. Don't mess with me.

GOOSY. No use fightin', Foots. Go on peaceably.

JOE. They fine fallows, Steve an' Foots.

FOOTS. But we ain't killed nobody.

DAWSON. Tell it to the judge, boys. I ain't takin' evidence.

BIG STEVE. But Ah got to work man. I got to send some money away.

GOOSY. You can't beat the law.

FOOTS. Ah ain't skeered o' no law.

BIG STEVE. We been a fightin' coal together, Foots, an' we ain't beat yit. The coal's after us, but we've beat. I reckon we'll fight the law. There ain't much difference, 'ceptin' the coal gits everybody an' the laws is allus pickin' on niggahs.

DAWSON. (Pulling a Colt revolver.) Start something if you like.

FOOTS. We ain't got much chance, Steve.

BIG STEVE. We'll go, officer, ef yo' let us finish this job.

DAWSON. The devil I will. Yo'll go now. Think I'm goin' wait on yer convenience.

FOOTS. (Grabbing the can of powder which lies within reach.) My pardner says we'll go when we finish this work. (Holds the powder before him as a shield.)

BIG STEVE. (Desperately.) Ah jes' gotta get some money.

GOOSY. They'll go, Dawson. I'll vouch fer it.

DAWSON. How long will it take.

FOOTS. Not long.

DAWSON. (Curtly.) All right. I'll wait. This gun's drawn; one false move an'——. Joe, tell Lopez, we'll take the next car. (Exit Joe.)

BIG STEVE. 'Course we ain't goin' be long about provin' our innocence. But we're goin' as we said. (Big Steve begins to shovel frantically; Foots aids him. The cars are heard noisily speeding on.)

GOOSY. Where'd they take the body.

DAWSON. The undertaker has it in

charge. The coroner gave orders for it to be moved.

Goosy. Where was he last seen.

Dawson. He raided that darkey dance in town. After that he jumped in his car and he wasn't seen alive since. These two birds passed by the place he was found. Several persons on their way home saw them in a Ford car.

Big Steve. (Pausing in his shoveling.) We was comin' home from the dance.

Dawson. (Waving the revolver.) Tell it to the judge.

Joe. (Returning.) Oll right.

Dawson. Bring me that powder can, Joe.

Joe. Sure. (Fetches it.)

Goosy. Say, Joe, you might as well bore your holes for the next shot.

Dawson. No, you fellows stay right here. I may have to deputize you to help take in my prisoners.

(Silence, save the scraping of the shovels.)

Big Steve. Oh, Lawdy, Lawdy, Lawdy!

(Silence again. Only the iron tools can be heard. Suddenly a dull, thundering rumble is heard, followed by a sharp explosion. Immediately following this a sharp crackling echoes thru the gallery. The men cry out instinctively, "Gas! Gas!" The electric light at the entrance goes out and plunges all in darkness save for the unsteady lights on the safety lamps.)

Dawson. (Excitedly.) I'll shoot the first one of you prisoners that tries to get away.

Goosy. For God's sake, Dawson, there's been an explosion. Gas is burning down the gallery. Hear it cracking.

Joe. Queeck! *Abbasso! A terra!*

Foots. Lissen! Them's flames roarin'.

Big Steve. Down, git down on the floor.

Goosy. Hug the ground, Dawson, or you'll git your fool head burnt off.

(All fall precipitously to the floor. A dazzling wave of burning gas flashes over their prostrate forms.)

Big Steve. (After a silence.) That's what Ah calls singein' yo'.

Goosy. (Springing up.) Up! No time to lose. I've been in these gas explosions afore. The black damp's a comin'. We got to beat it two miles to the entrance.

(The others jump to their feet.)

Dawson. My God! What do you mean?

Foots. Run fo' yo' life!

Goosy. Run, fool, afore the black damp gits yo'.

Joe. (Hysterically.) Ah, *Madre Mia! Madre Mia!*

Big Steve. The black damp!

Dawson. (As the truth slowly dawns upon him.) The black damp! (Runs to the exit of the "room" and looks out into the dark gallery.) God! It's pitch dark. I can't see.

Goosy. The current's off. Connections broken. (Pushing determinedly past him.) Follow me. My lamp will make a little light as long as it and me will last. (Exit running; Dawson follows.)

Foots. Lemme out o' here, I kin outrun the damp. (Exits running.)

Joe. (Singing.) Giovanezza! (Dashes out madly.)

Big Steve. (In calm deliberation.) Help me fight the coal, Lord, help me fight the coal and dust and black death damp. (Rushes from "room.")

(The stage is empty for thirty seconds, when the sounds of the retreating foosteps have died away. The curtain falls.)

SCENE II

One half mile from the entrance in the long gallery. When the curtain rises only the vague outline of black overhanging walls and low ceiling are visible. Sounds of footsteps grow louder and louder, approaching with uneven, slow tread. The faint beam from the light of the safety lamp is seen. Finally Goosy appears followed at some distance by Dawson. Goosy's lamp is burning very low. Dawson of course has no light.

Goosy. (Staggering like a drunken man. He speaks out in a clear, supernatural voice the inner thoughts that obsess him.) I must watch out for live wires—the current may be on back here. May be it would be better to—to —my tongue wants to skip that word—to *die*—yes to die at once by electricity, sudden, killing volts, than to be smothered, choked this way by inches. O God! Do you hear me? Can you hear me? What will become of my poor child? Without mother, without father she will be so alone. I wonder if the Company will help her? Who is this behind me? He will have to help himself. He will have to go it alone, just as I am going it. Every man for himself. O yes. Maybe that is Foots. A good workman. (Peers.) No. It is Steve. Too bad he's a nigger. (Calls.) Hello. (His voice sounds hollow and rechoes.) Hello, Steve.

Dawson. I'm Dawson. Goosy! Thought you were Foots. (To himself as in a trance.) O why did I come after those men? Why, why, why? Some air, some air. I wonder if I could suck his breath to keep me alive.

Goosy. He's scared! So am I. Alone in the dark—God! "Sweet fields of Eden" my granddaddy used to sing when I was a boy on the farm in Pocohontas. Wonder if he's found them. Wonder if he's found his granddaddy, killed by the Indians. Wonder if I'll know. My wife used to teach the girl how to pray. Oh, I can't pray. I wonder if the entrance is near. It seem's to be receding. Maybe we're lost. Going the wrong way. O for the smell of pine trees, the sniff of the air from the West Virginia hills. Something's closing around my neck. (Screams.) It's chokin' me. (Staggers on.)

Dawson. (Groans.) I'm thirsty. I want water, water! I want air.

(Follows Goosy.)

Joe. (Singing, as if out of his head, as he enters forcing each step.)

Giovanezza! Giovanezza!
Primavera per Italia!
Mussolini!

(Speaks with low muffled voice, as though another were speaking thru him.) When I was a soldier in the army of Italy, I was proud to wear the uniform of the Fascisti, the black shirt. Now I wear the garb of the miner, black all over. These harsh speaking Americans call me Dago Joe, but my forefathers built Rome. Why did I not die in *Italia,* like a soldier. Now Carlotta will never know. She will wonder why no more letters will come bearing the likeness of Washington on the pink stamp *dei Stati Uniti,* or the face of Lincoln. My countrymen helped to make this America, her railroads, skyscrapers, fields of fruit. O Holy Mother, I belong to Youth, to the

Giovanezza, I do not want to die, not yet, not now! (He gasps, coughs, strangles.) I choke, choke, choke. (Exit clutching his throat.)

Foots. (Speaking naively, as if apart from his environment.) I remember my Alabama cabin. I first saw the hot sun there and smelled the honeysuckle and jasmin in the cool of the evening. There I grew up. My mammy was black and fat and her lap was soft and warm. I helped her pick cotton. I learned the songs of the mocking birds and the crickets at dawn, chirping when my bare feet plowed thru the dewy grass. I won't see or hear them any more. Mammy's dead. I can't see her, unless? I wonder if there is any truth in what the preachers say? I never did know my pappy. I remember the log school house—two terms, the big handed teacher an' the "white fo'ks" always wantin' work, more work, and givin' me things to eat out in the back yard with the dog. Then mines of Alabama, of Birmingham—Red Mountain, red whiskey, women, black, red, brown, yellow, red eyes. I see that long train pulling North, after the endless hours in Birmingham, fighting coal for them "white fo'ks' " steel mills to make guns to fight other "white fo'ks" across the ocean.

West Virginia! Mines of West Virginia! Another woman, different from other women, brown, wavy locks, sweet face—O memory of Buck Pope—robber, thief, I'll kill him! Prison—noose—chair! How can I get out of this. Ah, I'm chokin'! I'm chokin'. I don't want to die, I don't, an' leave Buck Pope. (Exit moaning.)

Big Steve. (Staggering in and lunging, almost falls.) I wonder where they have all gone. Everything is so still—(Looks around.)—like a graveyard. Where am I? Where am I going? Oh, yes, the entrance. It can't be far away now. Wonder if I'll be late for dinner. They'll pay off Saturday. (Pulls himself up with a start.) Oh, I've got to send that money to Sis, Saturday. (Laughs to himself.) Huh! Making her own clothes now. Ain't that summin'. Must let that gal go on! Never had no chance muhself. Oh well—lots a worse jobs than minin'. Wonder why the lights are out. Wonder why everything smells so hot and close. My, how tight my head feels. (Feels his temples.) What's that pounding? Oh! (Starts.) It's the explosion. We must run for our lives. I must hurry I may be too late—too late—(Staggers off choking.)

CURTAIN

Five Minutes Later

(A point further on in the gallery. The five men are huddled together in a sitting posture on the floor. The lights in the lamps are almost out.)

Dawson. Listen here, men. I've got to tell you all. (Attempts to rise, but falls back.) Listen, I say—I came here to arrest two of you. Which two? (He tries to look around at each man.) I can't see. It's getting darker and darker. Turn on the lights. Oh-yes—I will put it on the darkies. What difference does it make. They ain't got no come back. Who cares? But I'm going to tell it now. The niggers didn't kill Riley. Riley was a crook. He didn't play square. He pulled the poor cusses and let the rich go free. I used to tip him off, and he promised to divide the spoils. But he double crossed me and

played me for a fool. He was in with the Bootlegger ring. Do you hear, fellows? If I've got blood on my hands, it's crook's blood. I killed Riley. Do you hear, niggers, I killed Riley. (Tries to shout, but ends in a hoarse whisper.) I KILLED RILEY.

FOOTS. (Arousing himself.) Yo' means Buck Pope! Ah killed him! Ah couldn't let her have him. (Sinks back on floor. Joe and Goosy keel over without saying anything.)

DAWSON. (Whispering.) Riley's after me. He's chokin' me. Hel-p! (Cries out and ends in gurgle. He falls back. The lights all go out one after the other. There is silence. Then noises are heard from the direction of the entrance and voices. Rays from a flash light are seen, as the sound of men walking resounds. Two rescuers appear wearing gas masks. They talk thru the masks.)

FIRST RESCUER. The others had to turn back.

SECOND RESCUER. (Holding the flash light.) Strike a match.

FIRST RESCUER (Strikes a match; it goes out immediately. He strikes another. It also refuses to burn.

SECOND RESCUER. We can go no farther. (The light falls on the men.)

FIRST RESCUER. What's this?

SECOND RESCUER. Some of the boys.

FIRST RESCUER. Are they living?

SECOND RESCUER. (Kneels down and feels pulses.) Faintly beating.

FIRST RESCUER. We can take one and get out alive. There's a chance to save one.

SECOND RESCUER. Which one?

FIRST RESCUER. The one with no lamp in his cap.

SECOND RESCUER. Yes, he's the smallest.

FIRST RESCUER. I'm feeling faint. Hurry.

(The second Rescuer picks up the trunk of Dawson's unconscious form. The First Rescuer lifts him by the feet. They march off. The other men lay motionless.)

CURTAIN

Note. The characters cease to talk dialect in the speeches purporting to tell their thoughts. The thoughts of all men speak the same inner language.

My Body

My body is an instrument,
Play it you who will;
But they who touch the vital chords
Music will distil.

Let's say it is a violin,
Or better still a reed;
Through which to play a tune, Marlyn,
To sate your every need.

LEWIS ALEXANDER

Wishes

O, for a breast to weep upon
The tears that fain would flow,
For I am weighted down with grief
No other heart could know.

O, for a dark abyss in which
I soon could lay my head;
And slumber on and dream and dream
'Til earth gives up her dead.

And waking find that which was grief
Consumed by time's decay,
Feeling my spirit wing the heights
Against the light of day.

LEWIS ALEXANDER

Sympathy

I have dreams of my own,
You need not dream for me;
Far better I alone
Than in your company.

Though sympathy may lead
You to my door ajar,
Leave me still, to read
Dreams in a little star.

LEWIS ALEXANDER

Scratches

By May Miller

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

DANIEL BROADUS
JEFFERSON MEEKS
STUMP
ABBIE
MELDORA

TIME: 1915.

PLACE: Poodle Dog Pool Parlor, LeDroit Park, Washington, D. C.

SCENE: The room is the typical pool room of pre-war days. In the rear wall are two large windows, suggestive of a shop, and between them a door opens on the street. In the middle of the left side wall a door leads into a hallway. On both sides of the door are short rails with hooks for hanging wraps. On the right wall two cue stick racks are hung and above these a cheap gas fixture extends. Along this wall several chairs, with cuspidors close by their legs, are primply placed. Cheap prints and advertisements decorate all the available spaces. Well out in the room from the left down-stage is a large egg stove behind which in the corner a chair is almost hidden from view. Four pool tables are ranged in the middle of the room.

It is about five o'clock on a blustry winter day. The shadows of dusk are gathering. The brisk pace of the stooped figures that pass by the windows indicate the severity of the weather. (When the curtain rises the room is vacant save for Stump, a dark brown hunchback of uncertain age, who is asleep on the chair behind the stove. He awakes with a start and with apelike movements goes to the stove. He opens the door of the stove and peers in anxiously. From the box at his feet he scoops two shovels of coal which he throws on the fire. Closing the door he nods and humming lazily goes to the rack for the triangle. With this in hand, he swings around the tables racking the balls.)

Stump: (Singing softly)

What a wurl! What a wurl!
Tuh be bad, yuh musta been good;
An' tuh be good, yuh musta been bad
What a wurl! What a wurl!

(The door is flung open with a flourish and Abbie and Meldora enter. Abbie, a beautiful tall mulatto of about twenty-five years, is swathed in a long black fur coat and a dark toque fits snugly over her dark hair. Her com-

panion, an overpowdered and heavily rouged brown woman, is shorter in stature. She wears a coat of lighter fur, though plainly one of cheaper skins, and a brightly colored toque. The contrast between the two women is marked. Meldora is clearly a cheap imitation, whereas one indefinably feels that Abbie, in spite of dissipation, is to the manner born.)

MELDORA: (Rushing to the stove) Gawd! It's colder'n hell out there.

ABBIE: (With a musical drawl) You surely ain't expectin' no summer heat in January.

MELDORA: Foh Jesus sake, shut that door tight an' come on here an' git warm foh a minute.

ABBIE: (Closing the door and turning to Stump) Hello, Stump!

STUMP: Evenin', Mis' Abbie. What brung yuh out a day lak dis?

MELDORA: Even us lil' daughters of the rich need air.

ABBIE: You know good an' well I wouldn't of come if you hadn't dogged me to go to the theater with you.

MELDORA: Well not 'xactly dogged; but seein' I ain't goin' to be here nex' week, I did think as you might go wid your poor workin' friend to see huh lil' act.

STUMP: But from all I kin heah, it ain't no lil' act. All de men stops dere games tuh talk 'bout it.

MELDORA: Well you know them that's poor jus' natur'ly got to do. Now if all of us could be pretty an' grab a nice fella like Jeff.

ABBIE: Ah, Mel, quit that! (Turning to Stump) You ain't seen nothin' of Jeff lately; has you?

STUMP: No, I ain't. Jeff don' come heah 'til mos' nigh six o'clock. Fact, nobody much come 'til den.

ABBIE: That's the time I'm supposed to come back foh Jeff.

STUMP: (Hesitantly) Mis' Abbie, yuh think yuh mought be heah ton 'bout five minutes?

MELDORA: (Quickly) We sure do; it'll take me ten to thaw out.

STUMP: (Apologetically) Well, I was jus' athinkin' beings dere ain't nobody comin' no time soon dat I'd jus' step 'cross de street foh a minute.

ABBIE: To the chapel, eh?

MELDORA: An' he'll come back drunker 'n a biled owl.

STUMP: No, Mis' Abbie, honest. . . .

MELDORA: Oh, foh Gawd's sake stop your chinnin' an' git your coat. You could of been back, all the time you're mouthin'.

STUMP: Yes'm an' I'll be right back. (Stump hurriedly slings down the rack and grabs from a hook a rather shabby coat, which is much too big for him. He hastily goes out not daring to look back, as if afraid the women will change their minds.)

ABBIE: (Approaching the stove) You know, Mel, I ain't so much on stayin' in this Poodle Dog. Jeff'd raise the devil if he knew I come by here when he's away; but my feet jus' wouldn't carry me a step farther 'til they got warm.

MELDORA: Don' say nothin' 'bout feet! I'll be scared to take my shoes off. There ain't no tellin' whether my toes would be on or off.

(Meldora extends first one foot and then the other to the heat. Abbie stamps her feet alternately and spreads her hands to the heat, then restlessly strolls over to the window.)

ABBIE: (Impatiently) I know

Stump ain't comin' back here no time soon, an' you ought to be gittin' to the theater. What time does your act go on?

MELDORA: Don' go talkin' 'bout that damn'd act. Ada Overton herself couldn't dance on these feet.

ABBIE: (Glancing restlessly out the window.) I wish that ——. (She stops suddenly, then continues as if speaking to herself.) There's somethin' awfully familiar 'bout that beggar's back. — — — Oh, no, it can't be though.

MELDORA: Are you talkin' to yourself or me? Remember please I hates riddles.

ABBIE: (Not heeding Meldora's words) My gawd, it is! (She peers once more, then recoils. She rushes back to the stove and grasps Meldora's arm.)

ABBIE: (Whispering) Mel, Mel, I saw him!

MELDORA: (Starting) Who?

ABBIE: (Breathlessly) My husband!

MELDORA: Gawd! you scared me. How kin that be your husban'? Didn't you say you lef' him in Philly?

ABBIE: (A little reassured) Uh-huh, I did. (Stepping back to the window and again peering cautiously) Oh, Mel, it is him. It don't matter where I lef' him, he's out there. Nobody don't forget Dan Broadus in a hurry—leastways I wouldn't.

MELDORA: (Cautiously approaching the window to see) Well, if that's him, he ain't none too prosp'rous.

ABBIE: (Turning rather defiantly on Meldora) Don't joke 'bout him, 'cause there ain't nothin' funny 'bout bein' cold out there in that blizzard an' you know it. (Abbie looks out the window as if drawn toward the man in the street.) Mel, look, he's beggin'!

MELDORA: Now what'cha got to go in mournin' 'bout that foh?

ABBIE: But he mus' be hungry an' cold to be beggin'. I know Dan well 'nough to know he wouldn't be if.

MELDORA: That's his lil' load an' let him tote it. Ain't you full an' warm wid the best lookin' coat Jeff could buy on your back?

ABBIE: I know all that too, but. . . .

MELDORA: I ain't got nothin' to say myself. You had him an' it seems to me if you'd wanted him you'd have kept him while you had him. Nobody stole you; you yourself ran away from Philly an' him.

ABBIE: It wasn't 'cause I wanted to so much; I jus' had to.

MELDORA: Don' go tellin' nobody that lie.

ABBIE: Well I mean I liked Dan, but things didn't go right. It was jus' fine till he went to that church. 'Course Dan was a gambler, but he was such a good gambler. He didn't think nothin' of winnin' a hundred dollars at one haul. We ate well, we dressed well, an' we was happy. Then he went to that dam'd church an' come away vowin' that he'd got religion an' wasn't never goin' to touch a card nor no dice again; swore he'd starve first.

MELDORA: An' that's jus' what you started to do; eh?

ABBIE: Jus' 'bout. There wasn't much to eat an' nothin' to wear.

MELDORA: Ain't nobody blamin' you.

ABBIE: Nobody 'ceptin' Dan; an' I think he mus' hate me. Somehow he couldn't understan' why I wanted him

to go back to gamblin'. He ustah say all the time, 'Lil' lady, you jus' wait. I'm goin' to make it yet at somethin' hones' an' respectable. (Rather regretfully) But I couldn't wait.

MELDORA: No, an' he don' seem to have gone up in the world none.

ABBIE: I don't know so much 'bout that.

MELDORA: 'Course I don't know neither, but I was jus' judgin' by 'pearences.

ABBIE: You can't never tell. You know there's some folks that scratches in life jus' like the men does at that table. They aims at one thing an' hits two. Wid Jeff, bein' respectable has to mean bein' poor, too.

MELDORA: An' some folks I know ain't got no better sense 'n to leave good providers foh them that scratches.

ABBIE: Don't be no fool, I ain't leavin' Jeff an' his money foh no beggar.

MELDORA: I knows good an' well you ain't.

ABBIE: (Insinuatingly) I guess you knows someone who'd take him right up, eh?

MELDORA: Now don't go slurrin' none 'cause two of us kin do that. Maybe there'd be them as wouldn't want Jeff an' his money, 'cause lot of them say, an' more believes, that it ain't all good money.

ABBIE: (Quickly) What 'cha mean?

MELDORA: (Lightly) Nothin'. Only Jeff's got gangs of money and gangs of time.

ABBIE: Well, what of it?

MELDORA: Nothin'. Oh, Abbie, let's quit this. What's the use in us fussin' 'bout that?

ABBIE: You're right, Mel; but seein' Dan out there kinda got to me. Fact, anybody beggin' a day like this gits to me. I wonder could I give him some money?

MELDORA: Now there you go again. 'Course you can't. He mus' never see you. As jealous as Jeff is, if he found out who he was he'd kill him in a hurry.

ABBIE: No tellin' what he'd do. 'Course, he swears I'll always love Dan an' that someday he's goin' to send me back to him.

MELDORA: An' you—how you feel 'bout it?

ABBIE: That ain't the question. The point is we got to get out of this place sometime. Then he'll see me, an' what's more he'd know me if I was draped like the Virgin Mary.

MELDORA: Ain't there no back door?

ABBIE: Yes, but Stump's got the keys. He'd have to open it.

MELDORA: (Going back to window) An' that onery nigger ain't come yit. (Looking more closely) I believe that's him now. Jumping Jerusalem! he has stopped to talk to your husban'.

ABBIE: (Drawing near the door which leads to the hallway) He ain't —he ain't bringin' him in here?

MELDORA: Wait—uh-huh—yes, he is. No, un-un, Stump's comin' alone.

(Abbie, who had gone into the hall when Meldora was talking, returns to the room just as Stump enters from the street.)

MELDORA: You tried to stay a lifetime.

STUMP: Ah! now, I didn't stay so long neither, but a old beggar stopped me.

ABBIE: (Over eagerly) An' what did he say?

STUMP: (Looking at her in surprise) What beggars allus says.

ABBIE: Yes, yes, but what did you say?

STUMP: Who me? I tol' him de Gawd's truf—dat I'd jus' spent mah las' penny foh a drink. But I tol' him as how Jeff mought be in an' I knew he'd give him de price of a dinner.

(Abbie and Meldora start perceptibly.)

MELDORA: (Recovering first) Say, Stump, ain't there no way we kin git into the alley from this place?

STUMP: What 'cha wan' tuh git in de alley foh?

MELDORA: The theater ain't far an' I was jus' wanderin' if we couldn't find a sheltered way. I hates to go out on that windy street. In the alley we could keep right warm close to the fence.

ABBIE: Sure, Stump can open that back door foh us. Can't you, Stump? (Abbie tucks a coin in Stump's hand.) An' you needn't say nothin' to Jeff 'bout me stoppin'.

STUMP: (Pocketing the coin and bringing out a bunch of keys) Sho! sho! Miss Abbie.

(Stump goes out into the hall and Abbie follows. Meldora goes near the stove for a final warming.)

ABBIE: (Calling from the hall) Come on, Mel, the door's open.

(Meldora exits. The street door opens and a rather heavy set brown man of about thirty-five enters. He is shabbily dressed and in spite of the cold wears no overcoat. When he enters his shoulders are badly stooped, but under the influence of the heat he straightens up and is surprisingly impressive. He nears the stove as Stump enters from the hall.)

DANIEL BROADUS: Do you mind me comin' in to wait?

STUMP: Naw.

DAN: I jus' couldn't stan' that cold no longer. It wasn't only this part of me that got cold. (He repeatedly flaps his arms across his chest to increase circulation.) Man, I was froze clean through, even down to my heart.

STUMP: Oh! Come on now, yo' heart can't freeze.

DAN: No, I guess it can't, but I jus' had that feelin' that there wasn't nothin' there. I looked at them folks passin' me by wrapped in warm coats an' I hated 'em. I looked at the lights burnin' in warm houses an' I wanted to break in an' bust 'em up.

STUMP: Uh! you mus' have been feelin' right bad. (Eyeing Daniel suspiciously) Yuh ain't got no such feelin' now; has yuh?

DAN: No. It's kinda funny what a fire kin do to a man. A minute ago I was hatin' everyone, but I ain't got no such feelin' now. This fire's done warmed me clean through.

(He nears the fire and sinks contentedly in a chair half hidden on the farther side of the stove. He sits smiling to himself with hands stretched out to the heat.)

STUMP: I ain't understandin' what 'cha saying' but I guess it's awright.

DAN: You kin understan' when a man says he's hungry; can't you?

STUMP: Now, if you had jus' said thirsty!

DAN: If you was talkin' 'bout licker you don't know what I mean, 'cause no man can't be as thirsty foh licker as

I am hungry foh food. I ain't had nothin' to eat since yistiddy.

STUMP: Uh! dat is right bad, but yuh jus' set dere an' wait 'til Jeff come. Jeff's got long dough. (Stump returns to his task of racking the balls, singing as he works. The street door opens and Jefferson Meeks enters. He is of the same stature as Dan, but there is a decided air of prosperity about him. He is well dressed and walks with ease. He does not notice the stranger in the corner nor does Dan immediately come forward.)

JEFF: Hey, Stump! How's things?

STUMP: Awright, Jeff, but de folks ain't started tuh come in yit.

JEFF: Oh, dey'll be comin' along now. Kinda hard tuh tear yo'self 'way from a fire dis evenin', even if dat fire is at home.

STUMP: I feels right sorry foh dem as ain't got no home an 'no fire dis evenin'.

JEFF: Well, I don't. I passed a beggar on de street dis aftahnoon an' I wouldn't give 'im a cent. (Dan who has been listening starts as if struck but remains where he is.) Dey ain't got no bus'ness bein' cold an' hungry. If dey had two cents wurth of guts, dey wouldn't be lak dat. (Jeff walks to the window and looks up and down the street.)

STUMP: How yuh mean?

JEFF: (Still looking out the window) Well, foh instance dey ain't willin' tuh chance nothin'. Look at me. I got a pocket full of yaller money an' what's mo' I got a yaller gal comin' tuh meet me in a haf hour. How I come by either ain't nobody's bus'ness but I guess I kin stan' foh what I got. More 'n dat I can't say; but I ain't hungry an' cold, an' what's bes' I ain't alone.

(Dan moves slowly from behind the stove and comes to the front facing Jeff who wheels around nervously and looks in surprise at him and then furtively out the window.)

JEFF: (Harshly) Who're yuh?

DAN: I'm that beggar you wouldn't give a cent this afternoon.

JEFF: (Regaining his composure) Well, what 'cha want now?

DAN: Nothin', only I wants to tell you here's one beggar what's got guts an' if there's a chance of food I takes that chance.

JEFF: Aw! dey all talks dat way. Talk's so easy.

DAN: Maybe 'tis, but all I got to say is none better not come my way. I'd chance a trip to hell if it meant a good square meal.

JEFF: Yuh would, eh?

DAN: Sure. Any man what's hones' to God hungry will do anything.

JEFF: An' yuh says yuh is hones' tuh Gawd hungry, huh? You hear him, Stump?

STUMP: (Dropping the rack and approaching with interest) I sho do.

DAN: You talk like you got somethin' in mind.

JEFF: I has.

DAN: Well, what is it? I'm game.

JEFF: Yeah, dey all is 'til payin' time.

DAN: We ain't those kind of men where I comes from.

JEFF: An' where does yuh come from?

DAN: Philly.

JEFF: (Talking slowly) Philly—Philly—I knows some folks from Philly. Did yuh know a

STUMP: (In disgust) Huh, dis is goin' be a recollectin' party. I thought I was goin' tuh heah somethin' wurth while.

JEFF: An' yuh is, too, (Pointing to Dan) if he's still game.

DAN: Let's hear it.

JEFF: Heah it is. We shoots a snappy game of pool, fo' out of seben. (He extracts a yellow bill from a large roll of money.) If yuh wins, yuh gits dis yaller bill—money 'nough fo' gangs of dinners.

DAN: But I ain't got nothin' to put up.

JEFF: Yuh got yo'self, ain't yuh?

DAN: You mean me myself. But what 'cha want of me.

JEFF: An' heah's de man what'd chance dat hell journey! (He laughs in scorn.)

DAN: Hold that laff, I ain't backin' out of nothin'. An if I loses——.

JEFF: Yuh got tuh swap places wid me——me, money, gal an' all. Yuh'll be Jeff'son Meeks an' I'll be ———. (He points to Dan.)

DAN: Daniel Broadus.

JEFF: (Starting in surprise and looking intently at Dan. He opens his mouth as if to speak. He pauses and then speaks very slowly.) An' I'll be Daniel Broadus.

DAN: But both ways you'se the loser.

JEFF: I ain't kickin' none, is yuh game?

DAN: I said once I ain't changin' my mind. (To Stump) Here give me a stick; I ain't had one in my hand foh a year.

JEFF: 'Scuse, eh? 'Cause I guess yuh knows I'm 'bout de bes' in dese parts.

DAN: 'Scuse nothin'. Let's play.

JEFF: Stump, rack up seben.

(Stump goes willingly to the table. Dan turns the cue stick over and over in his hand as if trying to get accustomed to it. Jeff goes to the window and looks up and down the street, then carefully takes off his hat and coat and hangs them on a hook. He listens in the hallway for a minute, then cautiously closes the door. He takes a cue stick from the rack and approaches the table.)

JEFF: I guess Stump kin be our ref'ree, eh?

DAN: Sure.

JEFF: Befo' we begins, Stump, take one look up dat street.

STUMP: (Going to the window and peering out) I don' see nobody.

JEFF: Sho' dere ain't no one up or down, parked nowheres near.

STUMP: Naw, I tole yuh once; why?

JEFF: Come on let's play den. Stranger, yuh break 'em. (Dan shoots.)

STUMP: Dat ain't so bad! One in de corner.

DAN: Five in the side. (He shoots and misses.

STUMP: Awright, Jeff.

JEFF: Nation on de fo' in de side.

STUMP: Damned good shot! Once again.

JEFF: Five in de side. (Jeff shoots and misses) Hell! dat English didn't work.

STUMP: Not so good, buddy. Awright, stranger.

DAN: Nation in the two in the corner.

(Dan shoots and succeeds in pocketing two balls.)

STUMP: An' yuh says yuh ain't had a cue in yo' han' foh a yeah! Yuh're good. Once again an' dis is de money.

DAN: Six ball cross corner! (He shoots and scratches. Stump spots up two.)

STUMP: Tough luck, stranger. Nobody don' want no scratches right through heah. Awright, Jeff, call 'em.

JEFF: Pretty spot shot on de six. (He shoots.) Look at dat perfect English on de cue.

DAN: Couldn't of been better; worthy of Willie himself.

STUMP: Go on, Jeff.

JEFF: Two in de side. (He shoots and succeeds.)

STUMP: Jeff's goin' good. Call 'em again.

JEFF: Three in de corner. (He shoots, succeeds, and lays down the cue stick.)

STUMP: Easy out, ol' man!

DAN: (Laying down his stick) You surely plays a damned good game.

JEFF: Thanks. Not so worse, yo'self.

DAN: An' now that I've lost, what next?

JEFF: Dere ain't no next, only from now on I'm Daniel Broadus an' yuh're Jeff'son Meeks, de wanted one.

DAN: (In surprise.) Wanted? Wanted foh what?

JEFF: Foh a lil' transaction an' dis roll I'm carryin'. De coppers is hot on de trail, too.

STUMP: Lawd! Jeff, dey ain't goin' pull de place. (Stump goes to the window and peers up and down the street.)

STUMP: I sees two of 'em standin' down de street a lil' ways.

JEFF: I knowed dey had me spotted. An' what's mo' dere's two in de back, what's been dere.

DAN: I can't see that I kin help none.

JEFF: Yes, yuh kin. De onliest clue dey got is dat gray hat an' coat on de wall, dat's your'n from now on. Dey're goin' grab de one dat wears it out of dis room, an' yuh're jus' 'bout my size. All niggers look alak tuh 'em, an' dey'd jus' as soon have yuh as me.

DAN: You mean as Jeff'son Meeks I'm guilty, too.

JEFF: I means jus' dat. Now whine an' say dat ain't fair an' yuh didn't mean it.

DAN: It's too late to whine; ain't it? All dat was settled befo' the game.

STUMP: (Nervously from his stand by the window) I believes dey're comin' a lil' closer.

DAN: (Going to the rack and taking down the hat and coat) I guess I'll be gittin' along an' have this over with. There ain't no use havin' no messy scene. (He starts toward the door.)

JEFF: (Blocking the way and grabbing the hat and coat from Dan) Dat's my hat an' coat, Daniel Broadus. Yuh're too damned a good sport tuh rot in jail.

DAN: (In surprise) It's a chance I won't an' it's up to me to take it.

JEFF: (Gently pushing Dan back) Git out de way. Dis is my job an' I'se goin'a see it through. Remember de gal's part of de bargain. She'll be by heah in a lil while aftah me. Look out foh her. (He takes a large roll of money from his pocket and thrusts it into the hand of the astonished Dan.) Yuh'd bettah keep dat 'cause dat woman sho has needs.

(Dan starts to remonstrate as Jeff nears the door.)

STUMP: Jeff, don' go walkin' right into 'em.

JEFF: (Unheeding) Jus' don' yuh go followin' me into de street. Dere's still a chance I mought make it. So long boys. (Jeff goes out and closes the door behind him. Stump remains at the window staring down the street while Dan stands in the middle of the floor looking stupidly at the roll of bills as the curtain falls.)

(THE END)

The Writers

LEWIS ALEXANDER, well known poet of contemporary Negro literature, is also a promising playwright and a competent actor and director. The appearance of the Negro Play Number marks his third consecutive year as associate editor of that issue of The Magazine devoted to the younger Negro writers. At present he is directing the St. Vincent DePaul Players, a community drama group of Washington, D. C.

JOHN F. MATHEUS, one of the most successful of Negro short-story writers, has won prizes in all literary branches of the *Opportunity* contests for the past three years. He is head of the Department of Romance Languages at the State College for Negroes at Institute, West Virginia.

WILLIS RICHARDSON, the foremost playwright of the younger group, is a North Carolinian by birth. He won first prize in the play section of The Crisis Contest two successive years.

MAY MILLER is at present a teacher in Baltimore, Maryland. She has won prizes in both *The Crisis* and *Opportunity* contests.

EULALIE SPENCE, also a prize winner in *The Crisis* and *Opportunity* contests, won a prize in The David Belasco Tournament in New York City in 1927 for her play "The Starter." She teaches dramatics and public speaking in the New York City Schools.

Plays of Negro Life

A Survey

By Lewis Alexander

PLAYS of Negro Life are now recognized as an important factor in the development of a native American drama. The first real step in this direction was evinced by the successful staging of three plays of Negro life by the Hapgood Players in 1917. These plays, which were written by Ridgley Torrence, were *Granny Maumee, The Rider of Dreams,* and *Simon the Cyrenian.* For the first time in the history of the American stage, Negroes were seen on Broadway in serious Drama. These plays created a new interest in Negro life as a source of material for literary treatment. Dramatic groups in practically all the Negro colleges in the country, following the lead of Howard University of Washington, D. C., and Fisk University of Nashville, Tennessee, staged these plays by Torrence and several community groups throughout the states adopted them as their medium. Already a few race writers had modestly turned their attention to Negro Folk Plays but with little or no encouragement. The plays which they wrote were equally as good and in some instances better than these which reach public approval today. Joseph Seaman Cotter, Jr., left us enough plays of Negro life for a book. Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote several plays of Negro life. Mary P. Burrill, Carrie Williams Clifford and E. C. Williams were writing Plays of Negro Life long before the dawn of this Negro Literary Renaissance. I shall never forget Williams' *The Sheriff's Children,* or Carrie Clifford's *Tradition.* Both pioneer plays indeed. Willis Richardson, our foremost playwright of the younger group, was discovered and encouraged by Miss Burrill and can unerringly be called her protégé. Eloise Bibb Thompson, Alice Dunbar Nelson and others of less prominence were writing plays of Negro life long before this present Negrophile movement. The Negro Folk Play, the last development of this new era, was the first to discard its faddistic shackles and step into the rank of legitimate art. The novels of Negro life are largely responsible for the sudden rise of Plays of Negro Life; for the one very

creditably supported and accounted for the existence of the other. *Porgy* very adequately exemplifies this claim.

Nothing has done more to incite interest among race writers, in the possibilities of the Folk Play than the literary prizes offered in recent contests by Opportunity Magazine and The Crisis. It was the faith and vision of Casper Holstein which made this possible for Opportunity to do and the love and untiring interest of the Spingarns which made it possible for The Crisis. The contests and prizes offered reassured the race writers that it was worth while; for some of them whom I have previously mentioned had been writing a decade or more with little or no attention at all. The new spirit of the contests reincarnated the old writers and moved aspiring young dreamers to take up their pens and write. Consequently, G. D. Lipscomb of Marshall, Texas, Zora Neale Hurston of Jacksonville, Fla., May Miller of Washington, D. C., and Baltimore, Md., Frank Wilson of New York, John Matheus of West Virginia, Eulalie Spence of New York, Marita Bonner of Washington, D. C., and Roxbury Mass., Warren A. McDonald, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Willis Richardson, Brenda Ray Moryck and a host of others who had not been heard of before, won prizes for very creditable work and are still attracting attention, being included in such works as Shay's *Representative One Act Plays* and Locke and Gregory's *Plays of Negro Life.*

The work of Professors Koch and Paul Green plays an important part in the development of the Folk Drama. Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom,* which is a Pulitzer prize play, gained unstinted praise during its successful tour. The most representative plays of Negro life written by Negroes are found in Dr. Locke's and Prof. Gregory's book, *Plays of Negro Life,* which was recently published by Harper. The Negro Playwrights are coming into their own. The French Publishing company is issuing in pamphlet form the one act plays of Georgia Douglas Johnson and Eulalie Spence. The Appleton Press has just accepted Mrs. Johnson's play *Blue Blood* for early publication. In addition to being our foremost poetess, Mrs. Johnson is also proving herself a playwright of quality.

The Krigwa Little Theatre Movement organized by Dr. DuBois is quite instrumental in maintaining interest in the Negro Play. As a result of this organization we have branches in all the big cities in the country: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Cleveland at present lead in this project. The Charles Gilpin Players, The Ethiopian Art Theatre School, The Maude

Cuney Hare Players and The Dixwell Players are doing very creditable work. The Howard University Players, the oldest such organization in the country and the first to imbibe the idea of the establishment of a Negro Folk Theatre has almost completely died since Prof. Gregory resigned as its director and accepted a post in the Atlantic City Schools.

It is quite fitting that the Carolina Magazine, which for the past three years has devoted an entire issue to the works of the younger Negro writers, should enjoy the honor of a Negro Folk Play Issue, for the University of North Carolina, thru its organization The Carolina Playmakers has done more for the development of the folk play in America than any other University. The annual tour of the Playmakers is looked forward to with great anticipation. The appearance of this Negro Folk Play issue is but another of the many manifestations of the students of the University of North Carolina to keep their line of interest in the development of the Negro parallel with that of Paul Green, Howard Odum, White and Jackson, F. V. Calverton, E. L. C. Adams, Julia Peterkin, and others.

Atonement

That day was gray—
So gray, so gray,
And not a rain drop fell
To fill the vacancy left by
The broken hearted bell.

And I alone—
Alone, alone!
Wept 'til my eyes wold high,
And oh how I wept in silence;
Heaving not a sigh!

LEWIS ALEXANDER

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No Death

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

There is no death, old preacher Brown had preached,
 There is no death, no death—until he died.
The smile upon his dead face still beseeched
 The credulous to thrust tall death aside.

Old Brown was ushered graveward, saintly calm,
 To wait doom-trumpets crying heavenly birth,
Though coffined tight and larded well with balm
 Against the rumored customs of the earth.

Only his wife appraised his certainty:
 The morning when she found him filched of breath,
Stone-grey, and cold, she called no one to see
 The way he died, the way quick knives of death

Slipt through the ribs to split the heart in two;
 She cried, O God, no death! She prayed for grace,
And worked with trembling fingers to undo
 The stark surprise that hardened on his face.

THE
CAROLINA
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VOLUME 59 NUMBER 8

The Egocentric Predicament of the Modern Poet

By John Mebane

IN POETRY today, as in art, a revolt is taking place against the idea that the present is to be ruled by the traditional codes of the past. A "futurist" movement is making itself felt by changes in meter and form and by obscurity in thought. New schools of poetry have descended upon the camp of convention, endeavoring to thrust aside rules and limitations. Back of all this eccentricity in modern poetry there seems to lurk a powerful desire to be individual. Yet, the reader who knows the history of poetic experiment throughout the ages will find in this "new poetry" nothing that is really new and nothing that has not been attempted before. That which is often mistaken for originality is not originality at all—it is merely an attempt to disguise an experiment of past ages—an attempt to transform the efforts of forgotten writers by concealing them in the garb of modern masquerade.

The contemporary English and American poets lead us to believe that they have nothing but self. We are superior, they claim; and consequently, they write about their own superiority. So, reading modern poetry is primarily a search for the poet himself. Our modern poet exercises his gifts on subject matter lying close to himself: his ambitions, his happiness or unhappiness, his likes and dislikes, his

desires, his hopes; or else, he writes about objects of nature and happenings and affairs with concern as to his own particular view of them. His chief influences are his own sentiments and the temperament peculiar to himself.

In these days even minor poets, for the most part, shout out the importance of their works. Ezra Pound, the self-appointed leader of a group of radicals, is especially characterized by self-assertion. Mr. Pound has written *Lustrae* and *Personae* in both of which he seems to have nothing to say—"a fact which he conceals under an intellectual smartness which he mistakes for satire."[1] His verse broadcasts the fact that he is a great poet. Pound does not seek life; he seeks the library in which he can shut himself up all alone. He writes poetry which his readers cannot understand and then mocks them because of their ignorance. A typical example of his self-esteem is found in "Salutation the Second":

> How many will come after me,
> Singing as well as I sing, none better.

Pound is the super-sophisticated artist, taking himself away from the primal springs of life and from contact with simple people. His haughtiness is again shown when he asks:

> Will people accept them?
> (i.e., these songs)
> As a timorous wench from a centaur
> (or a centurion)
> Already they flee, howling in terror
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Will they be touched with the verisimilitude?
> Their virgin stupidity is untemptable.

Again he tells his poems when they meet the public to

> Salute them with your thumbs to your noses.

Pound, at times, indulges in cold irony, and again, in anger. The first lines of "Commission" follow:

> Go, my songs, to the lonely and the unsatisfied,
> Go also to the nerve-wracked, go to the enslaved-by-convention,
> Bear to them my contempt for their oppressors.
> Go as on a great wave of cool water,
> Bear my contempt of oppressors.

[1] H. M. Jones in "The Literary Lantern."

Go to the bourgeoise who is dying of her ennuis,
Go to the women in suburbs.
Go to the hideously wedded,
Go to them whose failure is concealed,
Go to the unluckily mated,
Go to the bought wife,
Go to the woman entailed.

But Pound's poetry does not go to the "lonely and unsatisfied." While he professes an interest in "oppressors" and the "bourgeoisie" and "women in suburbs," he is, in reality, scarcely concerned with anything so commonplace.

The attitude of our modern poet is delightfully stated by D. H. Lawrence:

You tell me I am wrong,
Who are you, who is anybody to tell me I am wrong?
I am not wrong.

Lawrence himself is a true Anarchist. He lives outside the circle of human society, rejecting its values and concentrated solely on his own. He is passionately interested in his own perception of the universe—life as he sees it. The reader finds in Lawrence not a doctrine, but a personality—a personality which is at once immensely interesting and annoying. He strips off his garments and exhibits himself in his entirety to a limited and blushing audience. He is often rude and more often vain; yet he has a remarkable insight into character and an exquisite sense of beauty. The following passage from "Forecast" contains both execrable bits and unforgettable beauty:

Patience, little Heart!
One day a heavy-breasted, June-hot woman
Will enter and shut the door, to stay.

And when your stifling soul would summon
Cool, lonely night, her breasts will keep the night at bay,
Leaning in your room like two tiger-lilies, curving
Their pale-gold petals back with steady will,
Killing the blue dusk with harsh scent, unnerving
Your body with their nipple-thrust, until
You thirst for coolness with a husky thirst.

Lawrence endeavors—and sometimes succeeds—in interpreting the warm, sensuous quality of sexual desire. He is primarily a love poet writing of his sensations and desires.

Even T. S. Eliot, that "delicate-fingered," sensitive-minded poet, has been caught up in the whirl of egocentricism. Simplicity is foreign to him; his abstruse euphuisms gaze politely into the faces of his unwary readers. His poetry appeals to the intellect—to acquired knowledge. Eliot is a scholarly carpenter, constructing his poems with precision and an over-emphasized exactitude. A typical example of a thought caught in one of his gargantuan prisms of words is found when he refers to "tainted money" in church:

> The sable presbyters approach
> The avenues of penitence;
> The young are red and pustular
> Clutching piaculative pence.

Eliot's poems are brilliant parades of erudition. He makes free use of French in his verses and occasionally goes so far as to write entire poems in the French language. He has become a classic over the head of the plain reader, and his encores come only from the intellectuals. Apparently Eliot delights in making the uncomfortable reader sweat over his "dialectical anfractuosities." Occasionally, readers manage to crawl through the first two verses of "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service" which I reprint here:

> Polyphiloprogenitive
> The sapient sutlers of the Lord
> Drift across the window panes.
> In the beginning was the Word.
>
> In the beginning was the Word.
> Superfetation of ἐνός
> And at the mensual turn of time
> Produced enervate Origen.

Then, there is that literary acrobat, that contorter of phrases, Maxwell Bodenheim. He has assumed the "behold me" attitude in his poetry. His art is one of concealed and egoistic emotions. Inevitably he trails off into a self-centered philosophy. The face he stares into is his own; gay maidens echo his own thoughts. Mr. Bodenheim's art is that of irony. He has often been classed as an "Expressionist" in that he records the sensations that objects produce in him. He is often whimsically grotesque.

DEATH

I shall walk down the road.
I shall turn and feel upon my feet
The kisses of death like scented rain.
For death is a black slave with little silver birds
Perched in a sleeping wreath upon his head.
He will tell me, his voice like jewels
Dropped into a satin bag,
How he has tip-toed after me down the road,
His heart made a dark whirlpool with longing for me.
Then he will graze me with his hands;
And I shall be one of the sleeping silver birds
Between the cold waves of his hair, as he tip-toes on . . .

The list of modern poets who have become inextricably tangled in the mesh of egocentricism is too long to record. The poet has adopted various and complicated methods to bring out his personality in his verse—to interpret life as he sees it. Thwarted desires and ambitions find themselves in distorted word pictures; artistic and sensitive natures are recorded in fragile phrases; the poet who has enjoyed life endeavors to catch up his happiness in a prism of variously-hued syllables.

The contemporary poet is trying to do something new, something individual. The subject matter of our "new poetry" is too limited—it is too often only that which lies close to the artist or within him. The outcome of this modern tendency is difficult to determine. Eccentricities in past ages have usually been mere passing fancies. It is the honest poet who lives after death. Radicalism is often the outcropping of the desire for recognition—but such recognition is seldom perennial. It is the flare of a match, bursting suddenly into a brilliant flame, then dying out when it reaches the end of inflammable material. The poet must enlarge his scope—venture from his narrow, enclosed corral, in which, at present, he is content to remain, and wander into a greater field. The foot of Parnassus lies in the distance; but the haze is too thick for us to distinguish it clearly. It is only when the poet breaks his fetters and regains his former freedom that he will be able to approach the mount and carve his name on the monument of lasting bronze.

Mama Spanks

By Lionel Abelson

Her fingers smacked against the child's behind . . .
Silence between them like a charmer under whose hand
The snakes close their fangs, noiselessly twitching away.
And demons, envious, crackled chains of light . . .
And the child's eyes widened, and he saw
Under the elegant mother's fingernails
Gluttonous cliffs, and vultures overhead
And an ocean hurling obsessions against the rock
And a red darkness like a nigger's hand
Crept over the sun and squeezed the writhing light.

His eyes, now violent, undermined the smoke.
His eyes shrieked, dynamiting the abyss
Beyond the silver curtains, the golden gates.

From the loud gloom of disintegration hurled
Inquisitorial pregnancies that told
Of babbling, gifted, lunatic defeats,
Insurance policies and window sashes,
And pageantries of luminous despairs,
And brothels manacled to lullabies,
And orchestras of epileptic fits,
Swept under a full archway . . .
Silence swelled
Like a balloon, bloated and ready to burst.
Then collapsed with a hiss.
"The kid bawls like a dope."
Locked within himself his fingers tore
A consciousness tattooed with cemeteries,
And his eyes, now uncontrollable, wandered into
The stone sahara where morphine never comes.

Old Woman

By Margaret Beaufort Miller

A GREY-HAIRED lady leaned out of a window to look at her garden. It was autumn and the russet leaves from her knotted oak trees were scattered about the winding paths. A crisp breeze had set them dancing. The late marigolds, and the pale yellow chrysanthemums—bachelor's button she called them, were slowly dying. The lady's eyes wandered to her herb bed and took in the ruined stalks of lavender and fennel and the rankly rotting tansy. But the clump of old woman was thriving as if it would outlast the season. A crisp breeze bore its sharp scent to her nostrils. Old woman smelt of winter.

The garden belonged not only to its present mistress but to all the romantic gentlewomen who had given her birth. For it was very old. A tall hedge of privet at the back sheltered the little labyrinth of sanded walks and prim box-bordered flower beds from the wind and storm. An ancient willow oak stood guard at either end. A bronze Eros sported by a sun-dial at the center. The garden and its host alike were gracious to every season save winter. They recalled a cycle of growth and flowering and inevitable decay. But their mistress had decreed that one blossom should die to give another birth. Thus with the bright pageant she might distract her eyes.

What was the lady thinking as she looked out of her window at the garden? She was thinking of the colour of her hair before it had turned grey. Not puce. Not copper. Precisely the shade of the oak leaves now dancing on the winding paths. Had not Peter Byrd told her so once? But he had told her so many things. One laughed at the things he said and did not believe them. She had not been credulous when he kissed her by the Eros in the tall shade of the privet. How many years ago? Ladies do not tell their ages. Peter Byrd! Peter Byrd! *Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Victoriae* thought the lady as she smiled. When one grows old, a warm hearth and a hot cup of China tea are the sole realities. One is well content to hold them as hostages against engrossing time. Concerning China tea, it might

be well to have some for Peter when he dropped in tonight. Brew it in the polished brass kettle. A quiet chat together and then if he remarked her bowl of artemisia on the reading table, she would pin a sprig in his bottonhole and tell him she thought old woman a more restful name. Peter would understand and they would go on being friends. Soon it will be winter, thought the grey-haired lady as she shivered and gently closed the window.

But the chilly ghosts of all the dead gentlewomen whose advice she did not need, continued to haunt the garden.

Girl In Doorway

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

Mill-whistles emphasize the dawn and scream
Duty's improbable reward where years
Shorten and mount to trick the mind from tears.
A girl within a narrow door, you dream
As workers go, spines bending, urged; you weep
A little, in this street where hearts surmise
No joy, where tired, unwondering men have eyes
Of children hearing tales before they sleep.
Vague dawn, above this work of God's despite,
Grows certainty of day; cicadas skirl
In trees; brats cry; all day, machine-wheels whirl.
Here you will laugh with him who comes at night,
Glad, whistling, proud, through grim, adjoining streets,
Bearing your destiny and a box of sweets.

Scars

By J. L. Curtis

BY HELL!" said I, looking up from the book I was reading to gaze abstractedly at a knot in the ceiling. There was nothing interesting in the knot at all, for many such knots contribute to the mural design of this big room which is less artistic than otherwise. The particular knot attracted my eyes and afforded my mind a sort of physical footing that it might be able to reflect with less difficulty upon some new material I was getting from the book. I must not say that the subject was entirely new to me, for I had indulged in some desultory thinking relative to the matter years ago and formed, it now seems, an erroneous conclusion. In fact, I am now reaping an undesirable harvest from seeds which I sowed upon mistaken grounds. The book seemed to give explanation to these things and to present them in a new light. Perhaps there is nothing to the book at all and it was just my mind playing jokes on me as it is wont to do lately.

I have lived in the big room now for nearly three weeks. (It is a very old room and the furniture in it is much older.) I have come to be attached to it quite sentimentally. Somehow the old things persuade me that I am living in another age. The other day I chanced to look into the lower drawer of this old, old dresser, and I disturbed the resting place of the queerest garments one ever saw—dresses, capes, bonnets, etc. Gosh, they must be old! I know they are four or five times as old as I, and I do not remember whether I am nineteen or twenty. I like to dress up in these old clothes and think of myself as Martha Washington. However, it is not easy for me to think of myself as a woman. Yes, I am living in another age, a flamboyant age, an age of ruffles.

When I came to live in this old room I brought with me necessary wearing apparel, a few modern novels, some college text-books, and those odds and ends that a fellow will carry along with him. They lend the modern touch and remind me that I should not form the habit of saying "thee" and "thou." Then, too, there are many never-to-be-forgotten scars left by various strokes of modern vice that are always reminding me of *now*. I was acquainted with too many amorous co-eds; stayed up too late at nights; smoked too many cigarettes; spent too much money and burnt too much gasoline. Now I have nerves to deal with, recurrent headaches, and a cough. By the way, that, I remember, is why I am here. That is why I came up here in the hills to live in this old, old room and every day to go down stairs and eat meals off an old, old table—delicious meals cooked by a nice lady of sixty.

Every day I talk aloud in this big room. Sometimes I make a speech about anything I want to; sometimes I read aloud; sometimes I sing a tune; sometimes

I vehemently blaspheme; sometimes, if I think of anything humorous, I boisterously laugh. Forever I cough, lightly at times, but there are times when, my dear aunt, I *do* cough, I make considerable fuss, but yesterday was the first time I had heard an echo in the big room. I had not wanted to hear it. I wanted no repetitions. Echoes remind me of meddlesome companions and those I dearly detest. However, despite my desires, and just as I was intensely interested in the new line of thought, somewhere from those bespeckled old walls came faintly the echo of my exclamation. It seemed to have the interrogative quality I so much despise.

"Well?"

"Purely a personal matter," I replied.

"No matter," came the echo.

"Now," said I, "if you are going to be so rude as to demand persistently, I shall explain the whole business, and then ask you to be polite enough to refrain from intruding again into a gentleman's privacy. Is it a bargain?"

"Bargain."

"In the first place, y' see, I am being instructed in some elementary principles of living which, if I had learned earlier, would never have permitted me to come and live in this old room with you. This book, y' see, sums up the whole affair in a nut shell. Oh, this book? Well, never mind what it is. Just bear in mind that it teaches particular doctrines about sowing wild oats, people growing better physically and morally rather than worse, how the emancipation of woman has made better conditions for the whole race, how the changes in feminine apparel of the last century have made better for the physical and moral culture of the people."

Just as I was winding up for a dissertation on dress, Mrs. Randall, the nice lady of sixty, called from down the stairs.

"Mr. Billy!"

"Yes ma'am?"

"Come down."

"Be right down."

Now Mrs. Randall never called unless there was something unusual or when a meal was served. It was not yet time for dinner, therefore something unusual was on hand. In a jiffy I was down.

"Mr. Billy, I want you to meet my granddaughter, Evelyn Randall."

Oh, yes, Evelyn was as exquisite as a rose! No, there is no doubt about it. She was lovely, slender, and not as tall as I. She just came up to my eyes, and, not only did she come up to them, she appealed to them in every way. A soft, wavy brown was her hair, and a mellow darkness were her eyes. She was a pure, fragile white, as if the sun had never shown upon her. In every way was she modern.

While the nice lady of sixty prepared dinner Evelyn and I were left alone, I to entertain Evelyn. It happened that she entertained me rather. This was her senior year in college and she was concentrating in dramatic arts. How she did bombard me with Shakespearian allusions! She rather expected me to be inter-

ested in *Shakespeare,* for who was not! Besides, she had already learned in a feminine way that I tapped intermittently on a foolish old typewriter up stairs. Hence, she deduced that I, as one who writes, was attached to Shakespeare. I concealed my lack of enthusiasm for the Elizabethan, and was then led to Scandinavia where I was drawn close to Ibsen. We left drama and touched upon epics, elegies and odes. We dealt with modern romance. She seemed always to allude only to those things that she thought would interest me. She had me figured exactly, for she never failed to interest. I appreciated that for, hell knows, I have this pettish mind to control, and nerves, my poor aunt!

I think I became quite sentimental, for I soon realized that my interest never waned, regardless of the subject of conversation. I was delighted to hear her voice and to see her eyes. On very short notice, I developed an intense interest in Swedish folk-lore, and I swear I always detested Swedes. I became hilarious over a new embroidery design for a pillow-case which she had observed in a work-basket. Hitherto, embroidered pillow-cases had appealed to me only as unpleasant roughness at night. I had even demanded that no such affairs infest my bed.

Now I really love music. What I do not know about it, however is much. I am damned if it was not like being in Paradise listening to those golden chords, when she sat at the piano and played a score I had always despised. I sang a tune to her accompaniment. She looked up and smiled and placed a white hand on mine.

Dinner was served. We ate and talked, she as daintily as a queen. At dinner she revealed the object of her visit. Besides paying a visit to grandmother's, this time she had more business. She was to play a major role in a piece portraying the south in colonial days. She wanted certain articles from grandmother's old wardrobe for costumes. This meant that I must part with a share of my age of ruffles upstairs. I must become more modern. Now what would I do with this beastly mind if it be deprived of all its playthings! But, y' know, I had not in the least thought of these things. I was thinking again of *now.* When I fell into a paroxysm of coughing I thought nothing of it. For the bursting headache that inevitably followed, those soft, dark eyes were a far more soothing anesthetic than my customary twenty grains of aspirin. Be gone with your age of ruffles, your flamboyancy! Give me *now!*

After dinner the kind lady of sixty was occupied with household duties and Evelyn and I were again left alone. In the meantime, all the colonial wardrobe had been inspected, and those articles that were needed were selected and packed neatly away in a travelling-bag. From these Evelyn selected a cape, a ruffled bonnet and a cream-colored, ancient frock which contained yards and yards of cloth. She donned them for my amusement. God in Heaven, what ecstasy! That sweet, white face; those dreamy, effulgent eyes! The whole visage was beaming out from those ruffles! She did several pirouettes in a dance to the center of the room where she made a graceful curtsy. Back she came and sat with me on the couch. I was living in a veritable Paradise!

Slender fingers touched my face and twined among my hair. A bonneted head rested against my shoulders. Crimson lips pressed pale, wan ones in a burning, passionate touch. Again it is *now!* A terrible fit of coughing overcame me and I found myself standing by the window.

* * * * *

To-day at ten which is my usual hour of rising, I went down for my pan-cake and coffee. The kind lady informed me that Evelyn had gone with the eight-thirty bus. She just *had* to go and rehearse. "An Appalachian Rose" *must* be a success. She had left me a note.

"Dear Mr. Billy,

Grandmother will not let me disturb you. She says you must rest. I want so much to see you again before I go, but I *must* leave on the bus.

Say, Mr. Billy, you would make a wonderful Charles Gaymore in "An Appalachian Rose." Please drive down to-night and rehearse with us. I know you will like it. Mr. Billy, I believe it will help you. Please.

The little scene we enacted last night was almost perfect for a part of the clandestine love affair of Charles and the Rose, and you weren't even acting!

I shall look for you tonight at seven.

Lovingly,

EVELYN."

I went back to the big room of knots and echo and began to try to think. Was I living now or then, or have I ever lived at all, or would I ever live? I could not decide.

"Oh, boy!" I exclaimed as I entered the room.

"Ho, boy," repeated Echo.

"Sorry, old fellow, to have left you so suddenly yesterday. I shall begin again to explain myself."

I lit a Melachrino and inhaled deeply. Great rings of smoke I blew preparatory to commencing my discussion. From my books I had selected my favorite text of Psychology, in which I intended to review some minor points after dismissing Echo, but a spasm of coughing overcame me. I squirmed in tearing convulsions. I writhed with the agony in my head. Exhausted, I took twenty-five grains of aspirin and lay upon the floor.

As To A Merciful God

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

O never may I live unto a day
 When scythes shall flash and ravage down my fields—
Never my bright grain be harvested to stay
 My hunger when no trusted sowing yields.
Let not my joy have quietude of sheaves;
 Let it be exigent, be fugitive
As fragmentary sky through many leaves;
 Veil my small fate; let days be tentative.
O if my heart, grown easeful, sleeps, take whips
 Of anguish, cords of expedient desire,
And ply with might; start trembling to my lips
 My heart's most sheltered flame of exiled fire.
Each day let unforseen delight enwrap
My startled senses like a thunderclap.

Pasticcio

The Beginnings of a Campus Anthology

With whatever apologies are due to Mr. Masters

By Wm. Louis Phillips

JOHN WESLEY LILES

I came here believing in faith, hope, and charity,
Things which I learned from my mother and my father,
A saintly minister, who thought all men good.
I believed Lawrence Hope
When he said he had finished the quiz
And wanted to see my answer to the last question.
The Council listened to his story,
While I was so frightened I could not speak
And was therefore presumed to be guilty.
They did not tell my father,
Who still believes that I fell from the window
By accident.

CHARLES MORTON

They said that if I didn't take one
I could not call myself a man.
It burned and made me cough,
But then I thought I needed another
And still another.
When we went out for air
We met Dr. Hooper, whose long neck
I had always thought resembled a giraffe's;
I told him so.

SAM SNIPES

They caught me in the garage
At the back of the Pi Delta house
With a gallon of very bad corn
Ready to be delivered.
The judges said my crime was doubly heinous
For corrupting the morals
Of the younger generation,
And put me on the roads
For sixty days.

BILL JACKSON

I hated them from the beginning,
Those stuck-up little prudes
Who imagined themselves the fountains of all wisdom
I was working my way,
And their inconsiderate demands,
Each one asking for the whole of my time,
As if his were the only course I had,
Nearly drove me mad.
In my junior year I had enough sense

To tell one what I thought of him
And go out into the world on my own,
To receive a much better education
Than all their books could ever have given me.

DR. SMITH

I taught the rudiments of ancient history
To thirty classes of incoming Freshmen;
Who thought me the epitome
Of the solemn, stony, grey pedantic,
And never suspected in all this time
That I was the author of "Roman Revels,"
With which, in their leisure periods,
They regaled their animal appetites.

CHARLIE WILLIAMS

I reckon there was a thousand of them knew my name
And bought their liquor from me on Saturday nights
While I waited on tables at Mrs. Wooten's.
They gave me tips and shoes and shirts,
And slipped me in the back gate at the football games.
But when I got too old to bring in the coffee
Without spilling any on the table,
They'd take me, tight, down to the stadium
And tell the crowd I was just
An old Chapel Hill darkey!

Three Poems

By K. Alisoun La Roche

SOUVENIR

I would give you my heart,
That you might use it as a stepping stone to fame.
Only give it back to me,
That I may wear a heart,
That bears the print of your foot.

DISILLUSION

Within a shining temple
I dreamed your soul
Burning as an altar candle.

One day I stole in at the door;
Reverent I stood in the shadows,
Then I crept forward
To warm my hands a little.

I stumbled back to the street again
Knowing the taper unlighted.

SANCTITY

Once I was near you,
The sun was on your hair;
I thought of a knight keeping vigil.
I stretched out my fingers toward you
Only to draw them back tremulously,
Fearful of touching the hand of one,
Who walked so near to God.

Morning in the Court of the King

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

Awaking, the frivolous harlequin World,
In too-thin motley, chilled from the night, mock-tragic,
Twirled a slow pirouette and unfurled
Grey clouds to eastward: deep magic
Would be lost—the Sun might enhue them to fancy;
Good clouds for banners, a casual stir
Of assent, were enough elegancy
To herald so frequent returning conqueror.

Titania Defieth Death

By Margaret Beaufort Miller

Titania: The summer still doth tend upon my state . . .
The summer still doth tend upon my state
And down the airy progress of my days
Shall it continue. Prithee list hereto:
The gibbous moon have I for audience,
The pale gloseworm doth light my junketings,
And all the earth shall scatter smaragdine
Beneath these tripping feet. Lo! They but touch;
Anon, the tender grass upspringeth it.
Ho Death! Why in my shade besettest me?
Dost thou not hail me Queen of Faeryland?
Thou art sole lord of mortal wights. Harping
Forever shall my plangent laughter pluck
Thy bones. I fear thee not. Thou triumphing,
Shalt hear small echo of a tiny bell.

Red Petals

By John Mebane

1.
Two red petals.
All else is naught.
Two red petals
And a brown vase, brimful;
Two succulent stalks growing slender,
Angustate just below the flower.
These alone. All else dies.

2.
Two red petals.
Adynamic heads nutate,
Grovel before fetish, *a perte de vue;*
Weep aphonic tears into a brown vase.

3.
Two red petals.
Cover me with redness!
Shroud me with cinnabar!

4.
Two red petals.
Weeping.

Pursuit

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

Remembering how Beauty lodged with me
Unknown, and one day was no longer there,
Nor could I find what way she turned to flee,
But only heard a tremor on the air
Her wings had fled, and a call upon the wind
That shall go with me down the surging years;
Recalling this, I seek where I shall find
With ecstasy, what once I lost in tears.
On some fall hill I know that Beauty stays
Her flight; each hill-top gained shows how she left
A moment since,—the seed-topt grass yet sways—
I guess her foot-print where the stone is cleft.
Still I follow Beauty faring whence she came,
Unseen, yet ever near me like a flame.

Hymn to Darkness

By D. Peirson Ricks

Daylight closes with increasing beauty;
Soft shadows blot the fainting protests of the sun;
Night marches in, dispelling lingering brilliance.
Reality has drawn his shade and Dreams begun.

Exquisite Beauty—but a dim illusion,
Clothed by the Mother of Shadows, tender Night;
Or stript by brutal Daylight stark and naked.
Ah, undraped bodies rudely shock the expectant sight.

Man, in pathetic blindness, seeks the Light,
Thinking by Truth to satisfy his longing soul—
Ah, truths are jests for gods to taste, my friend;
You'll find a jest at your expense is not so droll.

Here's my bed, and welcome for the night, sweet,
But when the sun begins to murmur, wake, and go;
Love and beauty—built for candle's whispers
And not the brazen shouts of rude Apollo.

Lovely women are for man's caresses—
Delicious wantoness is not an ugly vice—
Those whose lips are readiest for kisses
I think will precede saintly prudes to Paradise.

Virtue's coldness does not smack of Heaven;
The sweet desire of bodies is no shameful thing;
Let us use our trembling lips for kisses,
Dearest, we'll leave long hymns for colder lips to sing.

Ere I knew you I was not unhappy,
And I'd loved others—had forgotten—so again—
On the morrow you will be another,
Your name mayhap I'll struggle to recall—in vain.

Wait! But *Now* is here . . . eternal Present . . .
And I shall love you, dear, forever—ah, I seem
Sure to speak those words by practiced habit.
But could apparent Yesterday have been . . . a dream?

Lovers' promises are drunken babbles,
Forgotten when intoxication fades away.
"I shall love you, dear, forever," spoken,
But substitutes Eternity . . . for one To-day.

Lovers' promises are broken jewels—
You need but ask of me, I'll promise what you will;
For a kiss I'll give away my soul, yea,
But careful, Madame, lest I send to you the bill.

Lips that kiss sincerely soon are palling.
But those that burn a space, then laugh, are ne'er forgot;
Drinks are ever pleasing with a bitter tang in:
Too much sweetness tires the palate . . . does it not?

Truth and fact are full of disappointments—
Dearest, you'll always find your happiness in lies—
Little children have their Santa Clauses
And men and women pray to gods for Paradise.

Ah, pretty ones, how vain are you in lovers:
Poor fools! to think those sighing men are yours alone.
Frown on them and watch them pine away. Yes . . .
It's love for some fresh beauty does provoke that groan.

Dear, I love you for one precious moment,
And then your sister love I in the next no less,
And pass on so, *ad infinitum,*
For it is woman*kind*—not woman—I caress.

Madame, did I require it of you, pray?
I had not gold enough to buy such precious stuff;
'Tis more than I demanded or could pay—
Here—take my purse—look in it—that is not enough.

Madame, I have but asked the counterfeit;
Am I to blame that you have given to me *this*?
For yours—or yet, for any woman's heart,
Madame, forgive me—all I have to give—a kiss.

Gathering clouds that bank in gloomy silence
To some poor parching farmer mean good weather,
And yet . . . some stream will overflow destruction:
Must Plus and Minus ever walk together?

I am not bitter, Madame—that, nor hurt—
For I have found a lasting love, a rake and sage
Whose lips will never chill with sudden coldness,
And better . . . unlike women, Wine improves with age.

Ah God, may death be not another birth;
When I have ceased a mortal, let me have an end;
If I have erred, O punish me with scourge,
But not eternal life—so great I have not sinn'd.

Ah God, may Night not reach another Dawn;
Ah God, may Darkness never find again the Light;
Ah God, the weary road I wander on,
Give it no end—but give it no end of . . . Night.

Ah God, to be is only to endure;
Ah God, the smileless dead can only laugh sincere;
Ah God, the *Are Not* are the only pure;
And who are yet unborn the only free from fear.

Ah Nothing, there's no beautifuller than thou;
Ah Blindness, there's no call for dripping bitter tears;
Ah Death, thou art not dreadful to me now
Unless thou art the gateway unto endless years.

This Day Before Peace

By Howard Trueman Ramsden

Now that the flambeaux days unsconce their lust,
No craft of peace but death's fine stratagem
Shall turn my heart from want of this strange dust,
This world in bloom with no supporting stem.
So recent am I wove to this warm fabric
Of flesh and bone, I cannot verify
The strict, unmortal need for higher music
Than earth struck loud from silence and the sky.
Sufficient now, a sea-low plain where gods
Raised hills to stand eternally; enough,
This day while ancient fire is young, are clods
To feed the secret root; and while the rough,
Rich earth sustains me I will not be sorry:
The hunt is lively though it tracks no quarry.

Their Moment

The weird brass-like melody
of football
Hurls its blare against the
discordant babbling
Of the many coloured leaves.
Bronze twilight comes,
And a blue haze smothers
all in God-given
Beauty, while a staring crowd
watch a broken boy
Moan in agony and beat
his hands on imperceptibly
Steaming ground. It is
their moment. Off in
The woods a partridge
whistles cautiously,
Gathering his brood.

—H. G. T.

Avant Morte

By John Mebane

Hover near the form, the silent clay,
The stark eyes staring stupidiously into the abyss of day.
Count the ripples of flesh crawling over the cheek,
Turgid waters that meet and flow,
The lips move but do not speak,
The hands clutch but do not know.

Cold white, cold white dreaming of dusk;
Nimble fingers tear the husk,
Strip the body, peal the clay,
Scent the spirit, point the way.

Cheeks cannot escape the eyes;
Bones prop the sunken jaw;
Sockets bulging with surprise
Contest eternal law.

Long breezes fumbling at the wisps of hair
Whisper mouthfuls of laughter into ears,
Softly crying "thou art fair,
"Beware the ecstacy of tears."

Night hurls itself into the room
Threatening the light with poignards of black
Carrying a figure mounting the back
Of a stallion cloaked in gloom.

Ah, stern eyes, quiver, quiver,
Quick! search the stillness, batter the air!
Dark closes upon the last sliver
Of light. Death frowns upon its mare.

Ah, the last throes.
Cease to revile!
Let the eyes close—
Death assumes a smile.

book bazaar

"For All the Joys of Love Men There Have Leisure"

The Romanesque Lyric. By Philip Schuyler Allen, with translations of poems by Howard Mumford Jones. University of North Carolina Press.

I wish to say that this book is to be read and pleasantly understood only by those who have accepted the life of this century with the misgivings of the erudite. These are poems which are of incidents which belong to no single man in the time scheme of the universe and though they are slight in their entity their unity is composed of the joy in dissolution which will remain universal until the day comes when food pellets will be distributed to the robots of a blank age.

> "For all the joys of love men there have leisure,
> Since every ruder month is banished. . . . "

metaphrases Mr. Jones, and in reading this and other poems one should remember that these words were cast in place when men did not count assiduously the veins in oak leaves, nor did men go mad because of the existence of atoms in dead metal, nor because of the slow whirl of dry wind in vacuums.

I wish to imply that this book will interest the men of integrity, the men of soil and metal, the creatures of come and go. These verses I have read are for those who know why they are scornful and for those who do not renounce this existence because there is no other thing to do.

This is to say that this book will show, to those who must read in haste, that the same puzzles of lust and black bread inhibit flesh as ever, and as they will forever, and that these poems and the remarks attached are as thorough as the work of the ploughman in spring, and should be read with the certain exact pleasure and with the knowledge that no ploughman is as wistfully taciturn as the poet.

Joseph Mitchell.

"Linear Conquests Thin as Paper Sheets"

LOVE IN CHICAGO. By Charles Walt. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York.

Walt breaks into the literary gag by recording the misdoings of a Chicago racketeer, hot after adventure. The author gets under way by using the limp device of discovering the diary of a suicide's husband. After getting over this he passes from one inadequate killing to another and the impression which is had of the racketeer is of a monomaniac with a tendency to shoot people. The protag himself is a kind of man-who-knew-coolidge who spills his burdens to a diary rather than to shoe salesmen. The only excuse for his stupidity lies in his danger to the community and his ability to play a jew's harp.

Via the diary, Walt has thoughtfully listed every murder that the hustler commits. After leaving St. Louis without a red the boy wanders to Chicago looking for a good racket. For a while he has the beginner's bad breaks, then thinks of the bootlegging racket and goes into it strong. After putting a few of the objectionable boys out of the way he starts on his steady climb. Within a year he heads them all: the checkered-vest springle after a maiden bubble. But the gel doesn't come through. The racketeer, she says, hasn't the breeding. The remark annoys the hoister. Believing that her old man is in the running, he casually pays a few of the progressive Chicagoans to take the aged to the woods for the last rites. A local shiek, hot after the hand of the dame, is carried along, chloroformed. When he snaps out of the daze he gives himself away to the local cops by saying no I didn't do it—honest. He goes up, learns he doesn't stand a prayer, then hangs himself. The racketeer gets the maiden. By this time she's stunned but willing. Between the gel and the harp, the kark makes whoopee. The spritch hangs around but the harp gets lost. The racketeer goes woofie. The female gets hep to the diary, throws a hasty look at her past toobads, and puts herself under an L.

Walt used to be one of the boys. He's been in the bridewell plenty. Lately he turned methodist, got himself a book and went to New York. He got the yip from Zona Gale and the critics began to splay. But don't let him stick you. He's still in the racket.

* * * * *

Marshall: Now that I've paid two and a half bucks for this lousy book, lay off.

H. Chambliss, Jr.

Lovers Are Second

Angels and Earthly Creatures. By Elinor Wylie. Knopf. 1929.

"But because Angels could not propagate, nor make more Angels, he enlarged his love, in making man, that he so might enjoy all natures at once, and have the nature of Angels, and the nature of earthly Creatures, in one Person."

—*John Donne.*

This text Elinor Wylie chose for a last book of poems arranged by her for publication on December fifteenth, 1928, the day before she died. They are printed according to her wishes. The thesis of the prefatory sonnet is that lovers are second only to angels in glory, their perfection betrayed by admixture of clay. For what John Donne has said is a fallacy to logic; to faith essential verity. "Lovers devout and loyal shall renew the legend and refuse to let it fail." The initial sonnet sequence, *To a Person,* is the creation of a mature mind. It celebrates a living and selfless passion encroaching upon the domain of death. In earlier verse by Elinor Wylie, one detected self-conscious skill manipulating words for effect: but here one finds no characteristic frigidity of phrase, no sterile emotion; only a deep and puissant humanity. Her words are still jewels, but not in their own right, for she has kindled within them something of her tempered fire of spirit. They proclaim Sir Phillip Sidney doubly a preceptor; for Elinor Wylie has not solely couched her sonnets in Elizabethan idiom and borrowed Elizabethan conceits, but she has learned to look in her heart and write. The curious fervour of a mind disciplined to chill precision might preclude a new and rich experience; or too perhaps, a foreknowledge of last harvest.

The most distinguished poems in the book, with the exception of the sonnet sequence, are I think: *Chimaera Sleeping,* and *Hymn to Earth.* The former has a *Kubla Khan* quality of unearthly enchantment. *Angels and Earthly Creatures* is a very beautiful and worthy achievement. It is the last homage paid by a modern to the metaphysicians of the sixteenth century.

Margaret Beaufort Miller.